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APRIL 1989 A MONTHLY REVIEW EDITED BY R. EMMETT TYRRELL, JR.

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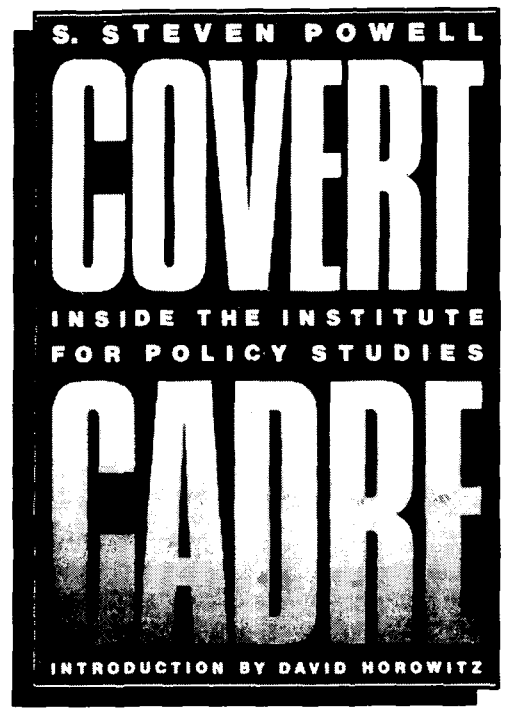

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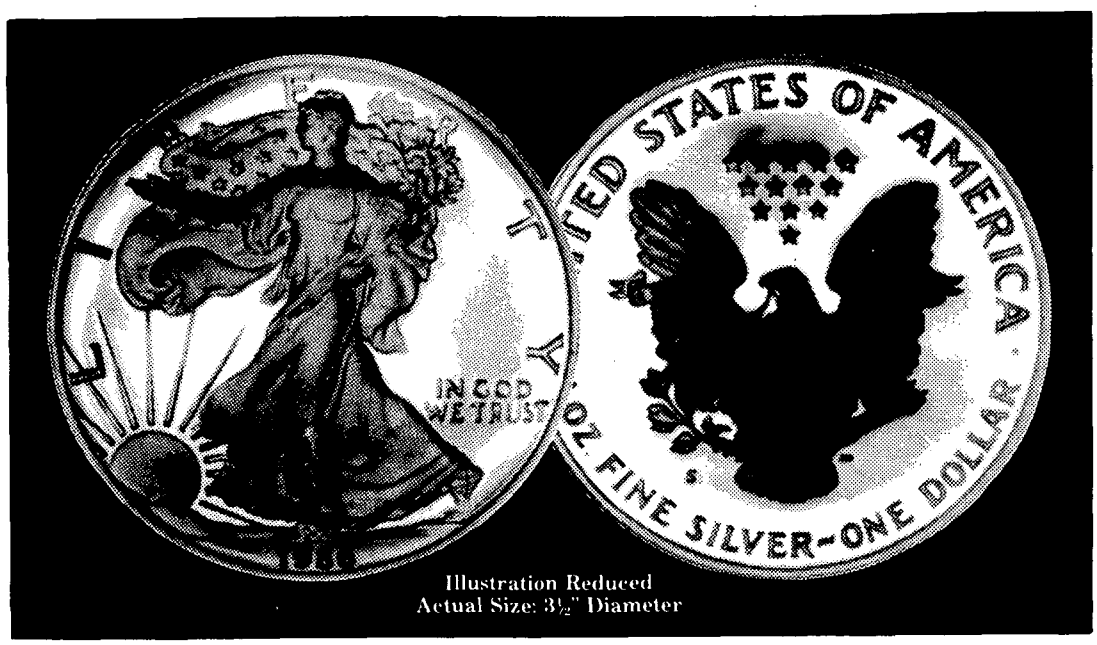

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You deserve a factual look at...

Those "Moderate" Arab States

Should the U.S. sell them advanced weaponry?

Should we sell sophisticated armaments to the so-called "moderate" Arab countries? Recently, Saudi Arabia, usually considered the leader of the "moderate" Arabs, turned to Britain for the biggest arms contract ever. Many are concerned that the U.S. Congress, being reluctant to allow unlimited arms sales to the Arabs, is depriving the U.S. of lucrative business.

What are the facts?

■ The Arab states boast today one of the largest, most deadly and most sophisticated concentration of armament the world has ever seen, surpassed only (and not by all that much) by the arsenals of the two super-powers. And the buildup of arms continues incessantly—making one wonder how these essentially backward countries can possibly absorb and utilize all this weaponry. Excepting the oil-rich Gulf countries, most of these Arab states can fairly be described as economic basket cases, with social and demographic problems that seem almost unsolvable. Still, they dedicate a large share of their meager resources to the acquisition of ever more deadly and offensive weaponry, instead of putting them into the service of building their countries and uplifting their populations.

■ Saudi Arabia, the kingpin of the "moderates," is an immensely wealthy but sparsely populated country. It fields an army of only 72,000 men, but has 190 military planes and 550 tanks—just about the largest ratio of military hardware to military manpower in the world. Until recently, the fiction was maintained that it needed this enormous arsenal in order to defend itself against the "threat of Iran." But now that Iran is prostrate, this can no longer be alleged, and even the most naive no longer believe it. As King Khaled put it quite bluntly: "When we build our military power, we have no designs on anybody, except those who took away our land and the holy places in Jerusalem, and we know who they are!"

■ "Moderate" Saudi Arabia has participated in every war against Israel, from the birth of the state in 1948. It has never made peace with Israel. It is the principal paymaster of Syria, Israel's most fervent enemy, and of the PLO, which is sworn to the destruction of Israel. It is the main player in the worldwide Arab boycott of Israel, whose purpose is the destruction of Israel's economy. Yet, Saudi Arabia, already armed to the teeth and beyond, has just acquired batteries of super missiles from China. They can reach every point in Israel within minutes and can be armed with chemical and atomic warheads. And Saudi Arabia has squadrons of fighter planes at its air base in Tobuk, just one minute's flying time from Israel.

■ But Saudi Arabia's "defense" needs are insatiable. It has just concluded an arms deal with Great Britain amounting to $27 billion, the largest ever negotiated by that country. It includes at least 40 Tornado fighter planes, 80 Westland helicopters, a minimum of six Sundown minesweepers, the construction of two major air bases, and much more. It is an enormous package and has only one purpose: to be part of the coordinated force that, it is hoped, will eventually destroy Israel. The remarkable thing is that Britain will not sell any arms to Israel, because it feels that it could "destabilize the region."

■ But those bare statistics refer only to some of the so-called "moderates." Including the self-proclaimed non-moderates, tiny Israel, the size of New Jersey, with 90% of its population concentrated in an area the size of metropolitan Indianapolis, faces one of the most daunting and fearsome military machines the world has ever seen. Counting only Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, Libya and Egypt, Israel faces 17,265 tanks, 2789 combat aircraft and 3 million armed men. And that is before the huge sale of military material by Britain, missile deals with the Chinese, and other weaponry in the pipeline.

The concept of the "moderate" Arab states is a myth. The Arabs are single-mindedly determined to destroy Israel. They are spending hundreds of billions of dollars in order to attain strategic superiority to Israel, and then to accomplish its destruction. Israel is the only viable strategic asset the United States has in the entire area. Those who sell weapons to Israel's enemies—foreign countries and American companies—are playing into the hands of America's enemies. We do not find the Soviet Union selling weapons to the enemies of *its* allies. Why should the United States be any less straightforward in its foreign policy? If Israel were vanquished, the Persian Gulf with its vital resources, the entire Middle East and the Mediterranean Basin would fall under the unquestioned dominion of the Soviet Union.

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C O N T E N T S

Bennett the Drug Czar: An Agenda....Fred Barnes 14
But he will need George Bush's doughty support to implement it.

Compassion Fatigue: Hong Kong and the Boat People....David L. Kirp 16
The world is turning a blind eye to Vietnamese refugees now being held as criminals.

Canadian Conundrums: Nationalism, Socialism, and Free Trade....Andy Stark 20
Last fall's election campaign in the Great White North was a showcase of left-wing inferiority and illogic.

My Life as a Dee-Cline....Herbert Stein 23
One of the country's great economists explains his lifelong reluctance to toe the party line.

DEPARTMENTS

The Continuing Crisis.... 8
Correspondence.... 9
Editorials/Fraudulence I/Fraudulence II....R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr. 10
Capitol Ideas/From Mercantilism to Markets....Tom Bethell 11
Among the Intellectualoids/Braking Glass....Joe Queenan 27
The Public Policy/Turning America into Junk....Joe Mysak 28
Presswatch/Woodward Explodes *Roe* v. *Wade*....Terry Eastland 30
The Nation's Pulse/The Coolidgean Press Conference....Victor Gold 32
The Business of America/Third World Deadbeats....Irwin M. Stelzer 34
Spectator's Journal/Thoughts on Homelessness Today....Ernest van den Haag 36
The Great American Saloon Series/Papagayo....Dave Shiflett 37
The Talkies/Fairly Funny....Bruce Bawer 38
The Campaign Spectator/Down the Tube....Andrew Ferguson 49
Current Wisdom....Assorted Jackasses 51

BOOK REVIEWS

Escalante, by Jay Mathews....Peter Skerry 40
Europeans, by Jane Kramer....Mark Lilla 42
Edmund Burke, by Stanley Ayling....Maurice Cranston 43
Final Disclosure, by David W. Belin....Karl O'Lessker 45
George Washington, edited by W. B. Allen....William McGurn 46

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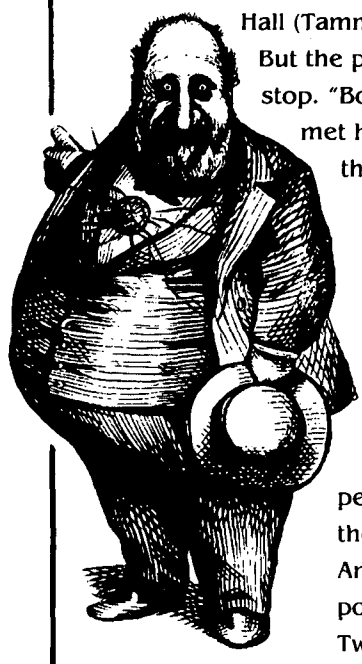

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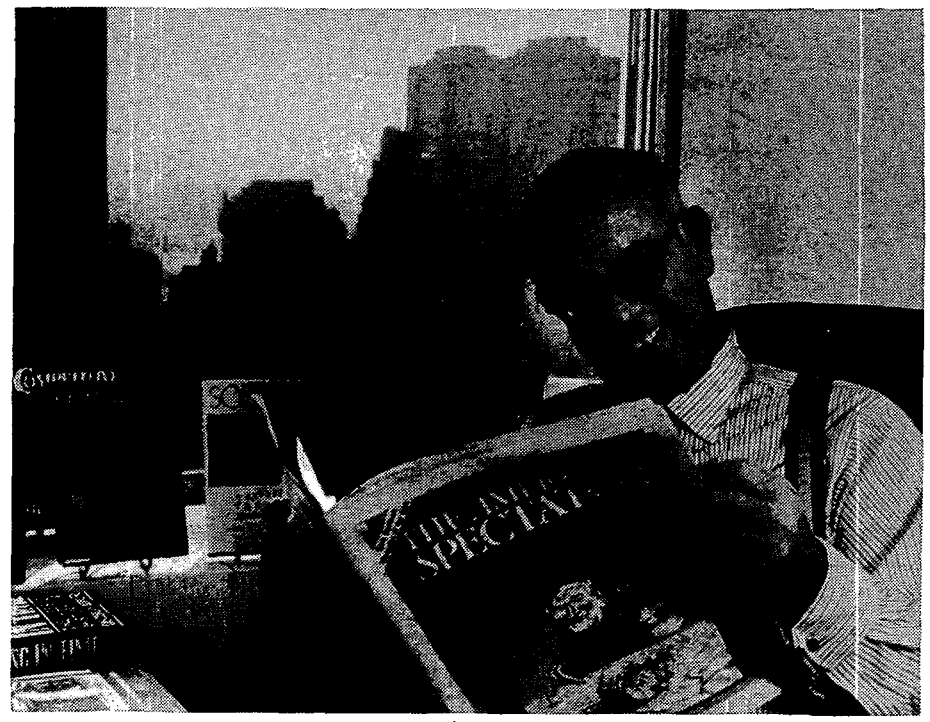

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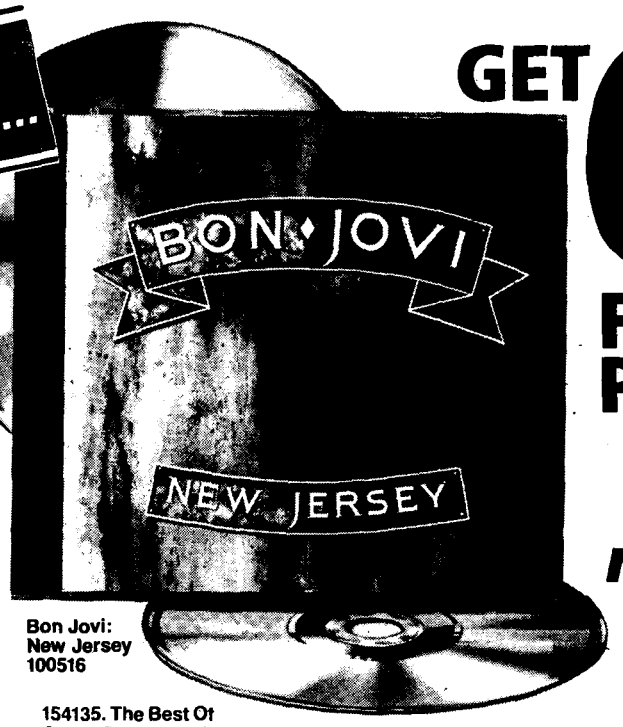

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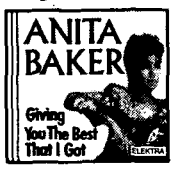

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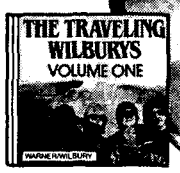

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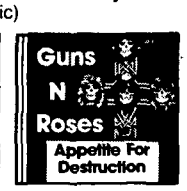

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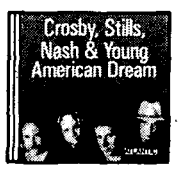

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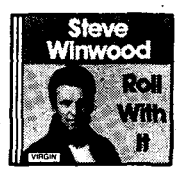

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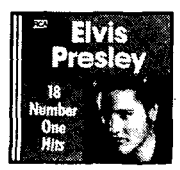

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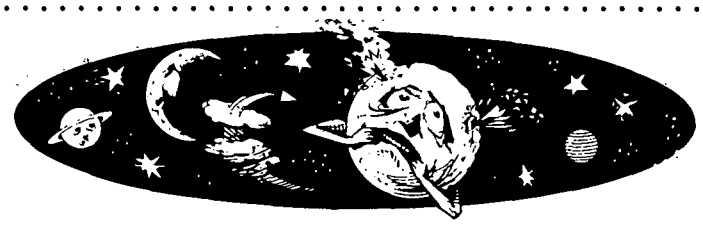
THE CONTINUING CRISIS



• February has now slipped into the past tense. In fact, this being Washington, February is now consigned to antiquity. The illuminati of this incomparable Gomorrah have no memory, which is probably for the best. Were they to remember what they were doing the week before last, they might be too mortified to exercise their public trust today. Hence in Washington the sweep of the second hand fossilizes all that it passes over. And former Senator John Tower was counting on that. Unfortunately, throughout the month Senate bluenoses led by the abstemious and chaste Senator Sam Nunn examined Mr. Tower's fossils in public, making his nomination as secretary of defense painfully problematic. The majestic process of the senatorial mind is not easily comprehensible, but apparently Senator Nunn and his confreres determined that though Mr. Tower was sufficiently gifted to serve in the Senate with them for twenty-four years, four as Senator Nunn's predecessor on the Senate Armed Services Committee, one really would not want to see such a fellow in a position of responsibility.

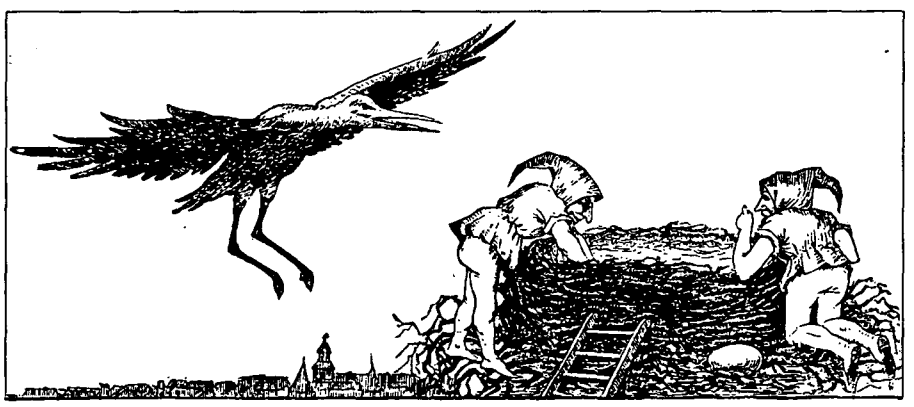
• Mr. Joel B. Steinberg, the distinguished attorney and relic of the *Playboy* philosophy, was convicted of first-degree manslaughter in the death of 6-year-old Lisa Steinberg, the unfortunate child being raised by him and his companion, Miss Hedda Nussbaum, in their Greenwich Village apartment. According to the *New York Times*'s front-page account of the conviction, "the horror of Lisa's death and the live television coverage of the trial . . . helped raise consciousness about child abuse in middle- and upper-class households." Presumably, faculties throughout the Ivy League are now on the alert for bruised Rockefellers and du Ponts. "People," the venerable *Times* concluded, "recognized a part of themselves in Ms. Nussbaum's account of submission. . . . At dinner parties, at parent-teacher meetings, the case was impossible to ignore"—that is the kind of mush-mush that now appears on the front page of the Nation's newspaper of record! In the holy city of Qum, the Rev. Ayatollah Khomeini put out a $5.6 million contract on the life of Mr. Salman Rushdie, author of *The Satanic Verses*, but then went overboard once again by remonstrating rather floridly against sale of the book in bookstores and through the mail.

• The courts are again being lured into a controversy that is essentially medical in nature. New Hampshire's Supreme Court has been requested to pass judgment on when men of good will might adjudge a burp intentional, willful, and criminal. The case putatively originated with those two infamous eructations that Mr. James Jordan perpetrated during an April 1988 Breathalyzer test, but surely there is more to it, and do not be surprised if Mr. Ralph Nader and his stalwarts are involved, testing the state's throw-away bottle laws or attempting to establish "burp-free" sections in New Hampshire restaurants. In Rochester, New York, the lament has gone up: "Why didn't someone help Mr. Robert Hamm before it was too late?" For three days residents of this community passed Mr. Hamm's front porch as he waved at them from his garbage can. It appeared that he was stuck in the thing up to his armpits and wearing only a night shirt. "He waved to me and I acknowledged just like I'd done hundreds of times before," testified postman Mr. John Vare. "I just assumed he was sitting there reading the paper and smoking a cigar." Now county medical examiner Dr. Nicholas Forbes reports that Mr. Hamm really was stuck in his garbage can and eventually died of a heart attack.

• Approximately forty-five staff members of *Spy* magazine ran for their lives when office litter caught fire, setting off smoke alarms and sprinkler systems. Many members of the staff cannot swim, and co-editor Kurt Andersen was at particular risk, for he cannot run either, and the sprinkler systems caused his hair-coloring preparation to run all over his blouse. In Spokane, Washington, Mr. Donald Ball, director of Ball & Dodd Funeral Home, made cultural history when he revealed that a recent client, jazz musician Mr. Billy Tipton, had throughout his adult life actually been a woman, and a very pretty one at that. Mrs. Kitty Dukakis cleared up a lot of confusion when she entered an alcohol rehabilitation center. Mr. Noah Robinson, half-brother of the Rev. Jesse Jackson, was found guilty of half the charges against him in a Greenville, South Carolina court, including the stabbing of Miss Janice Denise Rosemond.

• After elaborate parliamentary tricks the United States House of Representatives confounded itself into defeating its own pay increase, and Turkey's Toilets Foundation has ended its 6-month search for that country's best-kept comfort stations. "Our purpose is to establish modern toilet-care habits and toilet technology in line with Western standards," solemnized Mr. Baha Tunaligil, the visionary whose dream guides the Toilets Foundation. He has his work cut out for him—for, as he lamented, this year's awards list was dominated by gas stations while "no hospitals, mosques, or schools were worthy."

• An article in the *American Journal of Psychiatry* reported that only 55 percent of all psychiatrists and 43 percent of all psychologists believe in God, though virtually all still believe in Freud and many even believe in the late C. G. Jung. In Davis Cup competition, the United States beat Paraguay, 2-0; and Paraguay's General Alfredo Stroessner ended his 34-year rule after a ferocious shoot-out at his Presidential Palace left 300 dead. In Larned, Kansas, Judge Philip C. Aldrich has decided to retire from the bench rather than face criminal charges that he ripped fourteen newly installed telephones from the Pawnee County Courthouse after they failed to respond to his admittedly maladroit long-distance dialing. The courthouse, according to deputy clerk Miss Joan Speed, will operate on a temporary telephone system until Judge Aldrich leaves.



• Two San Francisco congressional representatives, the Hon. Barbara Boxer and the Hon. Nancy Pelosi, nominated something called "the AIDS quilt" for the Nobel Peace Prize. The Census Bureau reports a record 504,404 elected officials at large in the country. Responding to studies by the Kinsey Institute for Sex Research that as many as 10 percent of the male population find the standard size condom too tight, Mayer Laboratories has come out with an extra-sized condom to be sold at health stores and pharmacies and to be called MAXX, though another possibility might be "Big Foot." At Pat's King of Steaks restaurant in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, an unidentified customer who complained about the staff's tardiness in serving his cheesesteak was stabbed to death by the restaurant's mercurial chef, Mr. Herbert Saxton.

• Mr. Ron Brown, a former associate of Jesse Jackson, became chairman of the Democratic party. Alfonso de Borbon y de Dampierre, the Duke of Cadiz, lost his life in a skiing accident at the Beaver Creek Resort in Colorado. Mr. Eddie LeVeque, the last of the original Keystone Kops, died at 92, and Mr. Oliver W. Sipple, a former marine who thwarted Miss Sara Jane Moore's attempt to assassinate President Gerald Ford, died at 47. Mr. Ford was President from 1974 to 1977. Also deceased is Mr. Frank (Killer Joe) Piro, the legendary dance instructor who taught New Yorkers such steps as the mambo, the cha-cha, the merengue, the twist, the frug, the frog, the watusi, the mule, the hullygully, and Monet's Waterlilies. He was 68.

• In Rome, Italian porn star turned parliamentarian Miss Ilona Staller protested the United States government's refusal to grant her a visa by demonstrating in front of the U.S. Consulate and exposing her pendulous breasts to consulate staff members, causing several of the staff's young men—unless changes have been made—to become

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nauseous. In Jamaica's elections former socialist Prime Minister Mr. Michael Manley beat Prime Minister Edward Seaga. In Los Angeles, Dr. Barrie Thorne, in recognition of her distinguished research on gender in American society, was appointed Barbra Streisand Professor of Intimacy and Sexuality at the University of Southern California—her telephone number is available upon request. In Oklahoma City, Mr. Leonard Hobson sat quietly in his car for three days while officious meter maids placed seven parking citations on his windshield until one noticed that Mr. Hobson, 67, who has had a long history of illness, was dead. Mr. Kenneth Lamar Noid, 22, whom authorities described as "television-saturated," held two employees of a suburban-based Domino's Pizza store hostage for five hours in protest of the pizza chain's infelicitously named "Avoid the Noid" commercials. And President George Bush submitted a $1.16 trillion budget to Congress and left for Japan.

—RET

CORRESPONDENCE

Biotech, Society, and the Individual

I read Malcolm Gladwell's "Risk, Regulation, and Biotechnology" (*TAS*, January 1989) with mixed reactions. I applaud the incisive reporting of a complex issue, particularly on various agency regulations that have an impact on scientific research. However, several points were inadequately discussed.

The idea that society should "have a say" in how science is developed, if in force 100 years ago, would have prevented such modern necessities as electricity, automobiles, telephones, and medicine. Individual minds, not society, discover new knowledge and develop new technology.

The belief that our current situation can only improve with regard to restricting development of new science is contrary to the evidence. The fact that EPA proposed extending federal oversight to "categories of commercial and industrial uses of micro-organisms that had not previously been covered by regulations" shows explicitly that government will control everything it can get away with, as an end in itself. Further, Gladwell's view that "commercialization of animal research will simply go forward by other means" ignores the power of environmental groups, the animal rights movement, and such diverse government retaliation as insider trading enforcement.

Finally, reference to the "allocation of public resources" in maximizing our health and welfare reveals that Gladwell is talking the same language as the regulators. Our political system has practically relegated the individual mind to a public resource. That may become our society's epitaph.

—Kurt Leininger
Corvallis, Oregon

Malcolm Gladwell replies:

I apologize to Mr. Leininger for "talking the same language as the regulators." Perhaps, as he apparently feels is the case with biotechnology, society has had too much of a say in the way in which my writing has developed.

Election Roundup

I find Fred Barnes's analysis ("Lessons of Campaign '88," *TAS*, January 1989) missing the mark by a light year.

The real lesson for the Democrats is to ponder what a greater blow-out the election would have been with a Bush running mate other than Quayle. The Democrats had every issue—and I mean *every*—in the campaign except the two that mattered: peace and prosperity. Those were insurmountable by Dukakis. Or anybody else.

—Stanley J. Kavan
Milford, Connecticut

Save the Pigs

I was dismayed by the cutting in February's Current Wisdom from the "budding New Age Orwell," but think you went too far. Of course poor Wellinghouse reached an absurd conclusion; however, that doesn't diminish the validity of the scene of suffering described in his letter to the *Washington Post*.

Truly, sir, I must have missed something, and respectfully hope that you will . . . explain why one should find a risible situation at hand amid the suffering of animals . . . not one of your best moments, *n'est-ce-pas?*

By the way, I have read your mag for years, subscribe to it, in fact, and am a Republican through and through. There's nothing like *TAS* to lift one's spirits here in the City, weltering about, as it were, in a storm of printed nonsense. Remember when we conservatives symbolically adopted pigs to counter the verbal attacks of the hippies against the police? So tell me how to explain the aforesaid Current Wisdom to my children.

—Marc-Ives Tumin
New York, New York

PAC Animals

RET ("Lifers on Capitol Hill," *TAS*, February 1989) has shed some welcome but inadequate light upon the ossification of our House of Representatives. Lopsided PAC contributions to incumbents, a frequent target of criticism, are actually much smaller than the advantages which incumbents take from the public treasury. For instance, since PACs appeared nearly two decades ago, Congress has appropriated for its own free mailings approximately twice as much money as all PACs contributed to congressional campaigns.

Furthermore, long congressional tenure has disrupted the traditional relationships between our separated branches of government. Prior to 1956, every American President who got a majority of the popular vote also got a Congress of his own party. President Eisenhower's broad victory in 1952 was accompanied by only a narrow and brief Republican advantage in Congress. In 1956, Democratic control of Congress survived the Eisenhower landslide. Since then, popular Republican Presidents have faced Democratic Congresses after the elections of 1968, 1972, 1980 (House only), 1984 (ditto), and 1988.

Thanks to *TAS*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and a few others, there is a slowly expanding public awareness of our problem. Thanks to most of the media, subversion of the American political system by Democrats entrenched in the Congress receives little notice.

—Ivan W. Parkins
Mt. Pleasant, Michigan

Attention Single Women

It is imperative that I acquire your T-shirt with haste as I plan to attract my future wife by wearing it. The first lithe and lovely girl who points with joyful surprise exclaiming, "You read *TAS*?!! I'd about given up hope!" will be immediately proposed to.

Thank you for your help in what was becoming a genuine dilemma, i.e., the finding of a like-minded wife.

—Lt. C. J. Check, USMC
Oceanside, California

Kenner Culture

For a magazine that emulates Mencken's *American Mercury*, *TAS* is surprisingly weak in its cultural journalism. When discussing the earthier details of American life the magazine can be sprightly, amusing, and accurate. I'm thinking about the saloon reviews, Ben Stein's front-line reports from the West Coast, Kent Owen's demented prose-poems celebrating life in Indiana (which would make a great book, by the way), and Bruce Bawer's consistently sensible movie reviews. The higher arts, though, are ignored by the magazine: dance, theatre, and poetry all exist in America, if not in *The American Spectator*. And when these subjects are brought up they tend to be written about in a manner which suggests . . . um . . . unfamiliarity. The classic example is the writer from *Barron's* who was given four pages to bitch about the dearth of commodity brokers in the contemporary novel.

The most recent example of such ignorance in action (and the immediate provocation for this letter) is George McCartney's review of Hugh Kenner's *A Sinking Island* (*TAS*, February 1989). Now, it says here that Mr. McCartney wrote a book on Evelyn Waugh and now teaches at St. John's University so he probably is familiar with his subject. You couldn't tell from his review, though.

McCartney's thesis is that Hugh Kenner is a critic fixated on high modernism. This obsession (or "high horse") blinds Kenner to the achievement of writers who are outside the modernist tradition. McCartney provides us a list of those writers Kenner ignores in his book on "the modern English writers": "We look in vain for any discussion of Aldous Huxley, Ivy Compton-Burnett, George Orwell, Joyce Carey, Henry Greene, Iris Murdoch, to name only a few of the many omissions." In addition Kenner slights the achievement of those nonmodernists he does mention: Kingsley Amis, John Osborne, Evelyn Waugh, and Philip Larkin.

But modernism is not Kenner's obsession, it is his subject. In two previous books Kenner essayed the impact of international modernism on the literature of Ireland and America. *A Sinking Island* deals with a related but more complicated problem: the relative non-impact of modernism on English literature. Kenner offers several explanations for this phenomenon, some more convincing than others.

He brings up, for example, the clubbishness of English society and the related desire of literate Englishmen for authors to have approachable personalities. A writer could be someone interestingly eccentric, but he had to share the tastes of his audience: in their own way, Woolf, Auden, and Larkin all satisfied this desire. (By contrast, Joyce and Pound had far less accessible per-

(continued on page 48)

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EDITORIALS

FRAUDULENCE I

by R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

Washington

Apparently I have again been defrauded by the public prints. Innocent that I am, I read headlines and take them to heart. Having read headlines attributing grievous impropriety to White House Counsel C. Boyden Gray, I concluded that the dog was guilty of highly unethical behavior. Deeper and deeper, paragraph after paragraph, was I lured into major news stories alleging Gray's disturbing misdeeds, and then the lights went on: no law had been broken; no one had enriched himself by abusing a public trust. In fact, no public trust had been abused. What kind of scandal is this?

Actually, it is a rather common one for this byzantine metropolis. Over the last fifteen years the geniuses on Capitol Hill have woven an elaborate net of unreadable rules, purportedly to keep officers of the executive branch conflict-free. The fewer contacts with the outside world, the better. If Washington's legislative branch has its way, the executive branch will be a kind of secular monastery with employees professing the usual noble vows, most notably those of poverty and silence.

As is its custom, the rules Congress adopts for the executive branch do not apply to senators or to representatives. So when one of your elected representatives is hauled off to the calaboose, it is for the usual stuff: conspiracy, extortion, racketeering, driving under the influence of alcohol, perhaps contributing to the delinquency of minors. Delicacy restrains me from identifying the recently convicted, but fourteen of your elected representatives have been sent up the river since 1973. (To find other felonious solons, one must go back to 1949. Apparently while absorbed with the ethics of others, it is Congress that has been experiencing a crime wave.)

However, if one is a devotee of Washington scandal, I recommend sticking with the misdeeds of senators and representatives. They are numerous, comprehensible, and rather delicious. The alleged ethics violations of a C. Boyden Gray might interest an accountant or a journalist pursuing a place on the front page beneath Second Coming headlines. But to understand them one needs to read one's newspaper with the assistance of a competent lawyer and auditor, which can become quite costly. Moreover, upon mastering the story one usually discovers that no crime has been committed. There's no human tragedy—perhaps a form left uncompleted, but we are not talking about the establishment of the Tweed Ring in the Executive Office Building.

The Tweed Ring was a superb scandal. When George Jones of the *New York Times* exposed it in 1871 he demonstrated courage and diligence in uncovering an abuse of government trust that earned the Democratic boss of New York City, William March Tweed, between $75 million and $200 million annually in 1871 dollars. Think of it: the reporter could have been killed. Now these stories about Gray could kill the reader. They are that tedious! And Gray does not stand accused of earning a nickel, not even of breaking a law. He is accused of the appearance of the appearance of the appearance of an impropriety.

When Mr. Gray's father died in 1982, his will made the younger Gray and three brothers trustees with fiduciary duty to oversee the family company for future generations of Grays. The brothers cannot sell the company and Boyden Gray can vacate his trusteeship only with difficulty. Since becoming counsel to Vice President George Bush, he has filed the requisite disclosure forms annually, including mention of his annual trusteeship fee of $100,000. This was all in conformity with the law. But now the *New York Times* wants Gray fired because of appearances!

Well, I do not like being deceived into believing that high crimes have been committed when they have not. I am contacting my legal counsel to investigate whether the *Times*'s act of deception is actionable. Mr. Gray was an excellent lawyer before leaving private practice to serve George Bush. Had he avoided government service, he would have by now earned several million dollars. When he returns to private practice, he can handle my case. □

Adapted from RET's weekly Washington Post *column syndicated by King Features.*

FRAUDULENCE II

Among this city's national treasures, one of the most precious, if least heralded, is the cheerful, thoughtful, superbly knowledgeable chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, Lynne Cheney. She is devoted to advancing the humanities, knowing as she does that it eases one's path through life to have a mind well stocked with history, philosophy, and literature.

Pursuant to her task, she is now notifying the universities of the inferior job they are doing in teaching the humanities to their clients. Actually, Mrs. Cheney is being too gentle. Based on a study she has recently concluded, the universities are guilty of mere laxity. Based on my researches, many are guilty of fraud and ought to be sending refunds to their abused students, many of whom have had such boring experiences at university that they will not, of their own free will, ever read another book. But more on that later.

Consider this. Despite all the boasts from academe about tightening the curriculum requirements, Mrs. Cheney's study reveals that most institutions of higher education maintain very few requirements for those studying the humanities. According to Mrs. Cheney's findings, "At 38 percent of the institutions, undergraduates can earn a bachelor's degree without taking a single course in history, and 77 percent without taking a foreign language." Moreover, 45 percent need not take any coursework in English or American literature, and 62 percent can graduate totally untouched by philosophy. Reviewing the reforms in curriculum of the past five years, Mrs. Cheney observes that "the significant thing is what didn't happen." Only 0.2 hours of humanities study have been added to university requirements nationally.

Alas, according to my researches, true friends of the humanities should be praying that not one minute more is required in the study of humanities until the profs return to a civilized con-

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ception of them. At many of the universities of this great Republic, on campuses where the eggheads once joshed that the intellectually inert jocks were studying basketweaving and shuffleboard, it is now considered highly intellectual to take courses in the art of the comic book, the cartoon, the cocktail party.

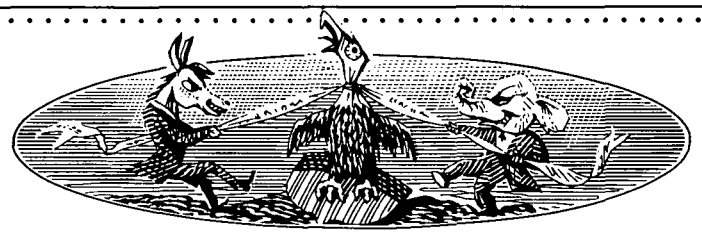
At Harvard a course is offered in "The Origins of Rock and Roll." At Wellesley an expository writing requirement can be met by taking a course that probes the question "Why is Donald Duck so much smarter than the criminal Beagle Boys?" At New York University a student interested in philosophy can slake his thirst by taking "Experiencing Sports: A Philosophical and Cultural Analysis." Again, a generation ago, if the lunkheads on the football team snoozed away in such a vacuous course the eggheads would shout scandal.

Not only are infantile gibberings dumped into the humanities curricula. At such hopelessly politicized asylums as Stanford, works by Aquinas, Descartes, and Mill have been banished from the struggling Great Books course and replaced by the pedestrian propaganda of such transient figures as Miss Zora Neale Hurston and Sr. Juan Ruolfo. Miss Hurston's classic is about a lady who thwarts the menfolk what dominate Amerika by becoming a beanpicker. Sr. Ruolfo's celebrates the "impotence and despair" of Mexican Indians residing in a desert. I am sure this is diverting stuff, but does it transcend Jane Austen?

Those classics that survive the faculty club's bookburners are read as ideological tracts. At Stanford Plato's *Republic* is read as an example of "anti-assimilationist movements." Surely there is more to Plato than this. Twenty-three hundred years of readers have thought so.

Students paying to take the aforementioned courses are being defrauded. They are forced to pay for a university education and the university is not delivering. They are led to believe that they are mastering the humanities, but all they are getting is another taste of what the historian Richard Hofstadter termed anti-intellectualism in American life. When his Pulitzer Prize–winning book of that name appeared twenty-seven years ago the anti-intellectualism threatened the universities. Now it has conquered them. □

CAPITOL IDEAS



FROM MERCANTILISM TO MARKETS

by Tom Bethell

The Cato Institute was packed as I have never seen it, with one or two standing outside in the February cold, their noses pressed to the window pane. There was scarcely a rustle as Hernando de Soto spoke. In the course of his speech I felt a sense of relief, as one sometimes does when long bottled-up truth finally escapes into the atmosphere. De Soto was talking about the Peruvian economy, not the most pressing problem in State-of-the-Union Washington, with President Bush not too many blocks away, still assembling his familiar old Jerry Ford–built team of go-along-to-get-along, nice-guy Republicans. Yet you knew that de Soto was talking about something much larger than Peru.

His book, *The Other Path: The Invisible Revolution in the Third World*, just published in the United States by Harper & Row, may be one of those rare books that change the way we look at the world. It is too early for such a judgment, of course. But it has the feel of a classic in embryo. It has already sold more copies in Peru than any other book in Peruvian history (so de Soto told me).

De Soto, forty-seven years old, looks like a successful businessman, and in a way that is exactly what he is. He even calls himself a businessman. Sometimes he is described as an economist, but he is rightly suspicious of the label.

Tom Bethell is The American Spectator*'s Washington Correspondent.*

In his thirties he was managing director of Switzerland's largest consulting engineering firm. Earlier he had gone to private school in Switzerland; his father, a diplomat, was living in self-imposed exile there. It was while he was at the International School of Geneva, when he was fourteen or fifteen years old, that de Soto began to learn what may be the most important lesson he has to teach us today: nations differ in wealth, yes, but this difference must be accounted for by something more precise than the vague, defeatist word "culture."

"I attack like a mad dog when I hear the word 'culture,' " he told me later in his Washington hotel. "There is this jar with the label 'culture' on it, and a lot of ignorance goes into that jar."

The development experts and the outside observers show up in Lima and concede that, yes, the Americans are more prosperous, they have this thing called capitalism, but the Peruvians . . . well, they have a different culture altogether. Not an inferior one, mind you, not really a deprived culture at all. Is there not something rather stirring and authentic about these sons and daughters of the Inca greatness, these blanket-draped peasants sitting outside their honest hovels with the Andean peaks rising up in the background? Do we really want them to descend to our own ignoble level, with our high-rise condominiums and plastic appliances and Kentucky Fried Chicken outlets? (Hard to believe the noble savages would choose such degradation, but you never know these days, so why take the risk?)

"Behind the arguments of the traditional development crowd," de Soto told *Forbes* magazine, "there's always racial prejudice." It enrages him to be told that he and his friends were "culturally not suited to the market economy system."

At the International School, de Soto recalled, the students came from sixty-four nations. But you never knew who was going to excel in any field. "It wasn't that the Latin Americans danced better and the Germans were better at mathematics," de Soto said. "I knew a lot of Germans who danced better than I did, but I was better at mathematics. So you lost all prejudice. It was very difficult to say that somebody because of his race or nationality or culture was better than another."

Nonetheless, they went home for holidays, and they returned to school with photographs. It soon became obvious to de Soto as he looked at these snapshots that Peru was poorer than most of the other countries—a lot poorer. At first he thought his own country was merely more romantic; he tacitly accepted the cultural argument himself. The Peruvians had lots of sunshine and horses to ride, bigger mustaches and more gold in their teeth. Later it began to sink in that they were, above all, poorer. Why was this?

He went to the University of Geneva, went on to graduate school (international studies), graduated high in his class, briefly became president of an international organization. He may have come from a poor country, he realized, and one that may have been "culturally deprived," or whatever it was supposed to be, but he wasn't deprived at all. "And a lot of my Third World friends weren't either." So he began to read books about development economics, and there, between the lines, he always found the same argument: culture. He thought it was insufficient as an explanation. There had to be something more objective, more concrete, something above all that could be changed. The problem with "culture" was that it was eternal, as hard to change as the genes. An optimist, he felt sure that change in Peru was not only necessary but possible.

He began to interview people on the streets of Lima. De Soto had considerable leadership and entrepreneurial abilities; without them he could not have organized his Institute for Liberty and Democracy, raised money, recruited researchers. But he also has the instincts of a journalist. And this has been his greatest asset. So he did what the World Bank country teams would never condescend to do, with their domestic servants, their tax-free salaries, and their high-rise isolation, tinkering by computer with their imaginary, hydraulic economy.

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He went out into the streets and began to interview street vendors and the minibus drivers, the workers of the "informal" economy.

He found that all these people were working illegally. There were so many rules on the books that it was as difficult for a newcomer to become a legal tradesman as it was for him to join the country club, and for the same reason. The regulations functioned to protect the business activities of the ruling class. Experimentally, de Soto and his team decided to set up a small garment factory to document the costs of entering the system legally. After paying essential bribes and filling out myriad forms, they calculated that one person would have to spend 289 days, six hours a day, to become certified. They tried the same thing in New York and it took two hours. And so, in Peru, if you want to go into business you do so illegally.

It is the same in other Latin American countries, de Soto told me. At the end of speeches abroad, members of the audience would stand up and typically say: "Mr. de Soto! This is not a Peruvian book. This is a Latin American book. I am a builder. You say that in Peru it took you 207 bureaucratic steps to get property rights to a sand dune for some poor people? Well I have just finished the same transaction in Colombia, and it took me 290 steps. Here are the papers. Here is the evidence." The book was on top of the bestseller list in Mexico, and Octavio Paz told him, "All you have to do is change the names and you're describing Mexico."

In Peru, de Soto studied 130 books on poor people, but not one of these books mentioned the key point that they always worked illegally. The one thing that the poor had in common was always ignored. He would encounter sermons of the Oscar Lewis variety—" 'Family of Sanchez' stuff," de Soto said, "telling us that the poor are really to blame because the father hits the kids, that kind of thing." The institutional circumstances of the poor were always overlooked. "There was no reference to the law, and yet they were illegal." So de Soto said: "Maybe the law has been the missing link that has prevented us from seeing what has been happening."

The law! When it works reasonably well, people don't see it. De Soto could see that in the U.S., in Switzerland, in Germany, there were legal institutions that influenced decision-making by those in power, rendering them accountable for their decisions. But no primer described these institutions. So once again he asked questions. No one seemed to have the answers. "Whenever we have tried to find one American who could tell us what the golden rules of rule-making are, or the same thing in Switzerland or Germany, there was not one who could give them to us," de Soto said. "Some of them do know perhaps 25 percent of the pie, but they don't go further than 25 percent." These things are not written down in any book, said de Soto, because they evolved spontaneously.

"Among your big academic experts," de Soto told the Cato crowd, "we have not found one person who can find out how your rules are made." For about twenty minutes he described some of these institutions and you could have heard a pin drop. At the end of his talk the Cato Institute's David Boaz said these were the nicest things yet said about the U.S. government from the Cato podium. One example was tort law. Ninety-five percent of public transportation in Lima was provided by the private (but illegal) sector in 1984, but the bus and taxi drivers who provide this useful service (at low cost) are unpopular. If someone is injured in the streets, it is difficult for him to recover damages: legally, the "company" involved doesn't exist at all. This leads to a widespread belief that the free market, or "capitalism," is inherently unfair, and that only government has the solution. "When

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there is no extracontractual [tort] law to cover informal activities," de Soto writes in *The Other Path*, "or such law is inadequate or improperly used, informal economic activity can be very costly to the larger community."

De Soto's name for the Peruvian system is mercantilism, "a politically administered economy in which economic agents [are] subject to specific, detailed regulation." European mercantilism, from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, was characterized "by the close ties that existed between an ever present state and a privileged and exclusive entrepreneurial clique." This is what exists in Latin America today. It is not that free markets in these countries have been tried and found wanting. They have not yet been tried.

He told me in Washington that "the purpose of the Institute for Liberty and Democracy is as humble as this: to help put in place the first cornerstones of a blueprint showing how to make the transition from a mercantilist to a market economy. We don't think anyone has yet got that blueprint." He said it would have two key features: institutions that make government accountable to the people (he cited: public access to government deliberations—forbidden in Peru; checks and balances; a free press). And what he called the "enfranchising state," meaning chiefly secure private property rights for all, and freedom of contract for all.

"As a matter of fact," de Soto said, "rule-making procedures and property rights are the two cornerstones of the West, as opposed to elections." U.S. government officials and development experts don't understand that elections alone are not enough, he said. It's not sufficient that the people be permitted to rotate tyrants every few years. Conversely, if the rule of law is secure, and private property and freedom of contract are inviolable, elections become far less important because what we have toiled to accumulate is beyond the reach of politicians. When property can be seized, on the other hand, elections are inappropriately transformed into winner-take-all contests. (Undoubtedly, for example, the Israeli government could swiftly tranquilize the West Bank by permitting Palestinians to own property there. When property is reduced from a right to a privilege, as also happened in British-ruled Ireland, disorder will always follow.)

It is a deplorable comment on U.S. elites as presently constituted (and Western elites generally) that they do not understand how their own system works. Even if they did (so great is the self-loathing of many Western intellectuals) it is far from clear that they would approve of others imitating such institutions. The institution of private property is, generally speaking, not understood by the economics profession; it is usually not even thought to be part of economics. Look in the indices of the leading economics textbooks today and you will see scant reference to property rights. Yet secure and transferable private property rights are in fact the cornerstone of economics, to use de Soto's metaphor.

In the past 150 years private property has been widely attacked as beneficial to the rich; rarely has it been defended as indispensable to the poor. Secure property rights protect the small property of the poor from the expropriation of the rich. That is what Hernando de Soto is here to tell us: the institutions that enabled the West to grow rich are institutions that protect the weak from the powerful. Frederic Bastiat said much the same thing in France, in the inauspicious year of 1848. Since then, little has been heard on the subject. Until the development experts learn this lesson, they will be wasting their efforts and the Third World will remain poor. Until the big commercial banks learn it, their debts will remain unpaid. □

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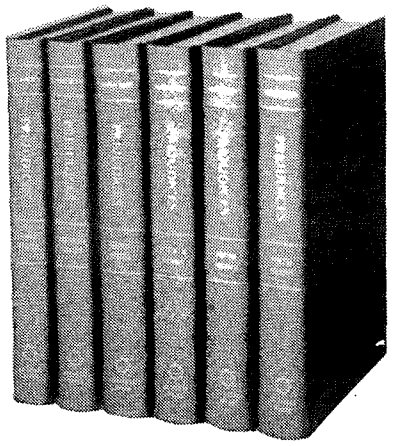

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Fred Barnes

BENNETT THE DRUG CZAR: AN AGENDA

But he will need George Bush's doughty support to implement it.

William Bennett is proof that not everyone in the Reagan Administration used his position to make a killing in the private sector after leaving government. Bennett could have. Shortly after Election Day, he cordially informed George Bush that he wasn't interested in a job in Bush's new administration, cabinet-level or otherwise. Instead Bennett established his own think tank, the Madison Center, in plush quarters in downtown Washington. And he signed up for dozens of speeches at $15,000 a pop, even gave some of them. He was also available to write op-ed pieces, magazine articles, education reports, and so on. The money would pour in.

Bennett decided he'd be willing to give up all this when, one month into the transition, Bush still hadn't filled the new White House post of director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy—drug czar. The only person Bush had offered it to, Democratic Senator Dennis Deconcini of Arizona, said no. In Washington, nobody was surprised at Deconcini's decision, since the drug czar is regarded as the Bush appointee least likely to succeed. How could anyone win the war against narcotics? Our borders are so long and porous that drugs can't be kept out, and a sizable chunk of the American population, maybe 15 percent, maybe more, craves them at almost any cost. That's the conventional view in Washington. In spite of it, Bennett phoned Bush in early December and asked for the job. Three weeks later it was his.

With luck, money, and strong backing from Bush, Bennett will succeed. It's not as hard as everyone thinks to produce a decrease in drug use that's both measurable by experts and perceptible to the public. But don't get euphoric yet. I'm talking about a drop over several years, not the elimination of drug abuse altogether.

Fred Barnes is a senior editor of the New Republic.

The bureaucratic and p.r. skills Bennett displayed as education secretary—he turned a nothing job into an influential one—should serve him well as czar. Two other things should help him more. First, he knows that while kowtowing to your agency's chief constituency group is applauded in Washington (unless you're secretary of defense), it merely preserves the status quo. So at Education, he didn't knuckle under to the National Education Association, which wants more of the same for teachers—pay hikes, shorter hours, no accountability. Bennett came out on top. As czar, he'll have to look askance at the well-intentioned recommendations of drug enforcers. He's got to be their boss, not their servant. Second, Bennett recognizes that the Washington wisdom about the war against drugs is wrong. It's winnable, but a real war has to be fought. In fact, headway has already been made.

Since the mid-1980s, drug use—cocaine, heroin, marijuana to a lesser extent—has lost its social cachet with middle-class kids and the fast-track set. "We have seen a fundamental shift in attitudes," Bennett told a White House conference in 1988. There's both objective and subjective evidence of the change. The annual poll of 15,000 high school students by the National Institute of Drug Abuse began showing a decline in use of cocaine, PCP, and marijuana in the mid-1980s. A survey of college students by pollster Gordon Black found only 6 percent were "occasional" users of cocaine in 1988 compared to 11 percent a year earlier. Students who said drug use "scared" them rose from 72 percent to 81 percent. Among older folks, says novelist Jay McInerney, 33, cocaine has become "unfashionable." He told the *Washington Post*: "People my age, we've been through the cocaine wars and we've seen it can hurt and even kill you. . . . It's really not around much anymore." The McInerney set just said no.

When Nancy Reagan sought a cause in 1982 in hopes of improving her image, she quickly latched on to drug abuse. At the time, America's evil stepmother was on the cutting edge of elite opinion. By sticking to her campaign year after year, she had a tremendously beneficial impact. So did Bennett with his campaign for drug-free schools. McInerney and the media followed their lead, though they'd never admit it. In 1985, scare stories about drugs began to appear in the media. *Newsweek*, which self-consciously tries to lead the pack on trendy stories, was particularly alarmist. This time, *Newsweek* guessed right. In 1986, drugs emerged as a major political issue, though not one about which conservatives and liberals (except the ACLU zealots) differed much.

In 1987 and 1988, the old debate over legalization of marijuana started up again, only this time the result was decisive. The legalizers took a beating. Mayor Kurt Schmoke of Baltimore put his future as a statewide officeholder in jeopardy by calling for legalization. The *New York Times* stuck to the reactionary liberal position that decriminalization of marijuana would make it easier to fight other drugs. But the *Times* couldn't persuade one of its favorite congressmen, Democrat Charles Rangel of Harlem, the chairman of the House Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control. When the *Times* said the new drug czar should take up decriminalization, Rangel shot back that "this is the wrong message." Legalization "would be a desperately wrong action in light of June 1988 data showing that 34.7 percent of 1,023 patients with automobile accident injuries treated by the Maryland Shock Trauma Center had used marijuana within four hours of being injured—more than had used alcohol." Rangel suggested the

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Times should be ashamed of itself for advocating decriminalization.

That brings us to what Bennett should do as czar. Drug abuse isn't what it once was, but it remains a serious national problem. The mood swing in elite opinion hasn't affected the underclass, perhaps 20 million strong. On the contrary, drugs have strengthened their grip on inner cities, and not just in New York and Washington. Crack, the form of cocaine that costs no more than seeing a movie and has a bigger bang, is sparking a surge in murders among drug dealers. Entire neighborhoods have fallen prey to crack dealers. A few have driven crack dealers out, but not many. Black Muslim patrols have routed dealers in several cities, and Bennett ought to encourage them to get active in more. In any case, he has a lot to do.

If he merely does more of what's being done now to fight drug abuse, he won't accomplish much. Not that most of the law enforcement, education, and treatment efforts aren't reasonably effective or at least well intentioned. They are. But spending more time and money on the same programs isn't the answer. The Rand Corporation concluded last year in a study of interdiction of drugs that assigning more military personnel to border duty won't help appreciably. The quality of intelligence information is too low. "Only one out of every eight vessels the Coast Guard boarded, with prior information suggesting that the ships might be carrying drugs, was actually smuggling," Rand found. ". . . Increased drug interdiction efforts are not likely to greatly affect the availability of cocaine in the United States," Rand said.

What's needed are bold steps. They shouldn't be substituted for current efforts, but taken in addition to them. I've got a few suggestions for Bennett:

• *Get Bush on board.* Bennett told reporters that he was "not crushed" by Bush's decision to make the drug czar only a half-fledged member of the cabinet. He should have been crushed. So long as other officials, the bureaucracy, and the press believe that Bennett lacks Bush's solid support or that Bush just isn't interested in what Bennett is doing, Bennett will be a policy eunuch. The czar's job, remember, wasn't one that Reagan or Bush thought was a good idea in the first place. It was imposed by Congress, and by Democrat Joseph Biden, the chairman of the Senate Judiciary Committee, more than anyone else.

If Bush doesn't take Bennett seriously, no one else will. And Bennett's job is difficult to begin with. He's got to issue, six months after taking the post, a national drug control strategy involving the sixteen federal agencies that officially come under his wing. These agencies will surely try to thwart anything new and bold unless Bennett is seen as Bush's personal agent. Bennett also has the job of redeploying federal narcs and drug doctors. Again he'll get resistance. Next fall he must pass on the budgets of all the antidrug agencies. They can appeal Bennett's decisions directly to Bush. Among the ways Bush could enhance Bennett's clout is to let the agencies know that Bush intends to give Bennett virtually a free hand on the budget. The President should also meet frequently with Bennett, invite him to all National Security Council and cabinet meetings, and appear in public with him. If Bush balks, both he and Bennett will suffer. Biden and his pals in Congress are ready to pounce at the slightest sign of indifference to the drug war.

• *Go to the source.* About 80 percent of the cocaine in the United States comes from Colombia. The drug tycoons there are so powerful that they assassinated Colombia's top law enforcement official—with impunity. Stepped-up interdiction won't put them out of business. Nor will reducing demand for crack here. It's not an exaggeration to say that the drug lords are a threat to America's national security, and increasingly to Europe's. The best approach would be a joint assault on them by American and Colombian forces. But what if the Colombians won't go along? Then the Bush Administration must act unilaterally to take out the drug bosses. True, Colombia will complain, world opinion will be aghast, and the United Nations will condemn Bush. But there will be a nice side effect. The world will be leery of crossing Bush for fear he'll strike again.

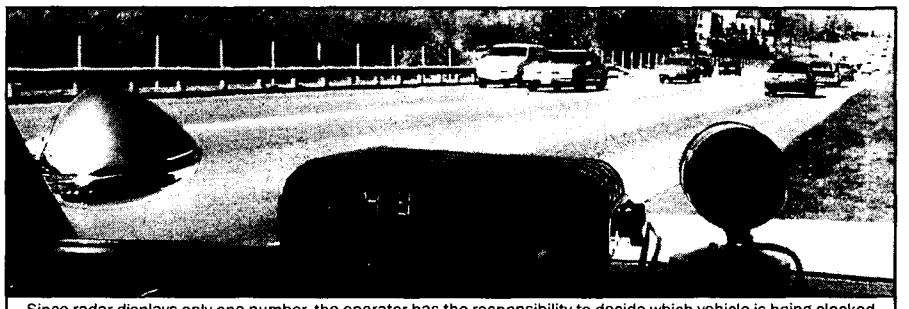
Bennett, by the way, has hinted that unilateral action is appropriate. In his speech to the White House Conference on Drug-Free America last year, he said, "We can do more to prevent criminals in foreign nations from growing and processing illegal drugs. It is to be hoped we can do this in collaboration with foreign governments—but if need be we must consider doing this by ourselves."

• *Deny bail for drug dealers.* It's discouraging when drug merchants are arrested, then quickly sent back to the streets on bail. They're a threat to the community and judges should be forced to treat them as such. If bail were automatically denied to anyone caught selling drugs or in possession of a minimum amount—an idea proposed by my colleague Mickey Kaus—it would have a remarkable deterrent effect. It would also make the streets safer. Of course, you'd have to build more jails, but we need more jails anyway. The place to start is with federal drug laws. Ask Congress to insert a no-bail provision. This would attract national attention and states would follow suit in their drug laws. ACLU lawyers would go berserk, of course. Let them.

• *Make drug treatment available on demand.* Taking drugs, like smoking, has become a class thing. Jay McInerney has given up cocaine, but the underclass is being ripped apart by crack. These folks are the hardest to reach. The idea that education is going to wean them from drugs is ridiculous in the extreme. Tough law enforcement will help. But drug treatment is needed. Now there's a long waiting period to get on the treatment rolls in most cities. If we're really fighting a war against drugs, treatment should be instantly available. That would cost money. Before spending it, Bennett should review all treatment programs to determine what works best. Why this isn't known yet is beyond me, but it isn't.

• *Require more drug testing.* The best deterrent to drug use by the middle class is testing. The problem is making testing palatable to people. This will take a sales job by Bennett. There are lots of arguments, but I can't think of any attractive ones. Maybe he can make the case that it's only a little invasion of privacy. Maybe he should try something else.

• *Put a D in movie ratings.* The White House conference in 1988 offered 107 recommendations for a drug-free America. One of them was intriguing, namely that the movie ratings take a stand against drugs. Any movie treating drugs or drug dealers lightly or favorably should have a D attached to its rating, as in PG-13-D. (The D is my idea.) Imagine how the ACLU would howl. It makes my heart warm just thinking about it. □



Since radar displays only one number, the operator has the responsibility to decide which vehicle is being clocked.

Why radar makes mistakes. How to protect yourself.

It's hard to believe, but traffic radar does not identify which vehicle is responsible for the speed displayed. It shows only a speed number. The radar operator must decide who to blame.

How radar works

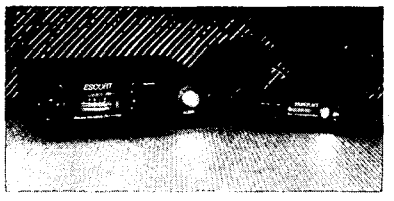
The radar gun is aimed at traffic and it transmits a beam of invisible radar waves. Moving objects reflect these waves back to the radar gun. Using the Doppler principle, the radar calculates speed from the reflected waves. But there's a problem.

The best guess

Remember, these reflections are invisible. And truck reflections can be ten times stronger than car reflections. How can the operator know for sure which vehicle is responsible for the number?

The truth is, in many cases he can't be sure. The result? You can be ticketed for somebody else's reflection.

The only way to defend yourself against these wrongful tickets is to know when radar is operating near you.



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David L. Kirp

COMPASSION FATIGUE: HONG KONG AND THE BOAT PEOPLE

The world is turning a blind eye to Vietnamese refugees now being held as criminals.

June 15, 1988, is circled in red, as a day of outrage on the calendars of more than 26,000 Vietnamese refugees in Hong Kong. Until that date, anyone who braved the typhoons of the South China Sea had at least a chance at a new life—a chance at what the Vietnamese prayerfully imagine as freedom—in the West. In fact, the odds against resettlement have grown worse during the 1980s, as the war in Vietnam came to seem more remote to the resettlement countries. Gradually these Vietnamese boat people, confined in what the Hong Kong government called closed camps—less politely, prisons—saw their dreams disfigured. Life in one such camp, Chi Ma Wan, in the weeks before the fateful date is described in the first part of this article.

Abruptly, though, even this tiny exit into the wider world was sealed shut for new arrivals. Hong Kong's government, acting on orders from Britain, declared that Vietnamese landing after June 15 would be routinely treated not as "genuine refugees" but as illegal immigrants who merely sought food and not freedom. They would be imprisoned, cut off from international organizations, and denied any possibility of resettlement in the West, held until Vietnam could be persuaded to take them back; the first handful were slated for "voluntary" repatriation in March. Those who had come earlier and been held at places like Chi Ma Wan still held onto the tiniest sliver of hope. For the newcomers—an embarrassment to a Western world that no longer pays much attention to people who flee Communism, a particular embarrassment to the British who will hand over Hong Kong to the Communist government of China in 1997—there is no hope at all.

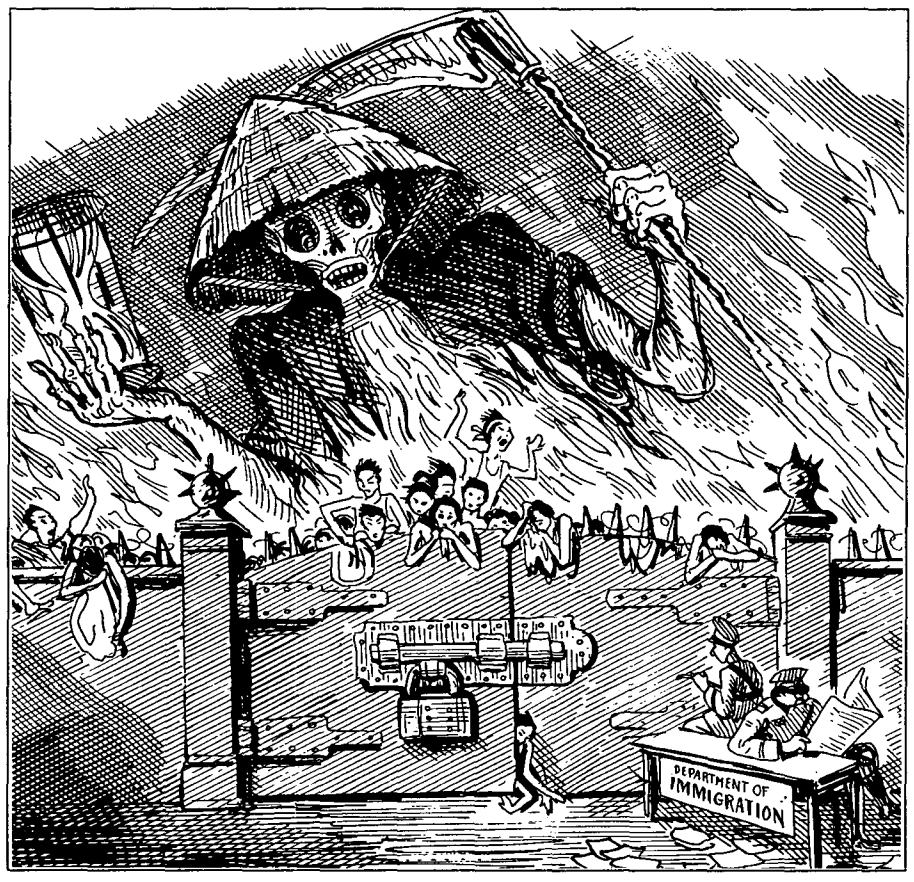
• • •

JUNE 1988:
"CHI MA WAN BEACH HOTEL"

It is an hour-and-a-half ride on a wheezing Hong Kong Corrections Department ferry from Queens Terminal to Chi Ma Wan Detention Center, one of the segregated camps where more than 16,000 Vietnamese refugees are warehoused. Seen from the water, Chi Ma Wan—literally, sesame bay—might be a resort, with its sliver of beach and its long, picturesque pier. The refugees sarcastically refer to it as "Chi Ma Wan Beach Hotel."

Between the beach and the dense complex of tin buildings and concrete pavement stand two metal fences, each twelve feet high. As I approach the gate, accompanied by a photographer and a press officer, children squeeze their faces against the metal barrier. These fences used to be topped with barbed wire—you can still see the fittings into which the wire was stretched—but a few years back, in what was described as a humane gesture, officials removed the jagged steel. At the gate, guards carefully check our credentials, for only those with proper authorization can enter.

The nearly 2,500 refugees at this camp fled from Vietnam, some of them very recently, others as long ago as 1982. Whole families packed into decrepit rowboats, whole villages crowded into rickety junks. It took them weeks to navigate the South China Sea and an undetermined number of those who set out died at sea. Sometimes their crafts were wrecked by typhoons. Sometimes the pirates who ply these waters stole their belongings and forced their boats fatally farther from the shore.



These boat people had risked their lives on what they thought was the first leg of a longer voyage to Australia or Britain, Canada or the United States, the dreamtime countries of the West. Instead, they are marooned in Hong Kong for the indefinite future. Others have been similarly stranded in Thailand, Malaysia, and Indonesia.

In 1986 and again in 1987, the number of arrivals rose by more than 50 percent, even as the rate of resettlement was falling by 44 percent. But this was only a prelude to the events of 1988, when more and more Vietnamese left their homeland, driven by fear of starvation and by rumors that the sanctuary of refuge would soon be denied them. Between January 1 and June 15, 1988, 7,700 boat people reached Hong Kong—twelve times as many as had arrived during the same period the year before. That influx triggered anger in Hong Kong and concern in London. The June 15 policy change was meant to stop other Vietnamese from leaving their homeland.

This pattern, an influx of refugees and measures taken to curb that influx, was familiar enough. Before July 2, 1982—the other red-circled day of outrage in the calendar of the Vietnamese here—refugees coming to Hong Kong could live in the camps and go outside for work. The decision to confine boat people who arrived after that date in closed camps like Chi Ma Wan was meant as a "humane deterrent" to migration. Make life hard, it was felt, and fewer Vietnamese would flee their homeland. But Hong Kong could never be as unpleasant as Vietnam, the refugees say, for "Vietnam is just one big prison."

In practice, "humane deterrence" isolates the refugees in an environment of privation. At Chi Ma Wan, they are packed in quonset huts that

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lack heat and ventilation. Summer temperatures, which regularly top 100 degrees, force them to sleep outside at night, and the winter cold makes nighttime sleep impossible. During the monsoon season, mud cakes the floors and seeps into the bedding. Whole families are confined to cubicles not much larger than a baby's crib. A sheet or faded fabric remnant, sometimes just a strip of plastic webbing to prevent the children from falling out, is all that separates one family from another.

The cubicles are stacked like boxes, three high, thirty or forty to a row, two or three rows in a building. The weather this month is pleasant by Hong Kong standards. But even in the mornings the temperature inside these barracks reaches the high eighties and a fan overhead barely stirs the fetid air. The lights, bare bulbs, are too dim for sewing or reading. They remain on twenty-four hours a day as a security precaution. The toilets, foul-smelling portables, stand outside. Early in the morning, long lines of inmates wait patiently to gain access to them.

During the day, some camp residents will be in Salvation Army–run workshops, learning to make plastic flowers or toothpicks—and being exposed, willy nilly, to the Gospel. Overhead, a banner proclaims "Jesus Was Born For You." Two mornings a week, twenty or thirty refugees will sit down with the Dutch ladies, as they are called, and busy themselves with arts and crafts. Occasionally there is an outing for the children of the camp, to an Oriental garden or the space museum. These trips are special treats, for they are the only time refugee children see grass or encounter a cat.

Refugees can make up to $20 a week sweeping the trash (there are signs throughout the camp scolding litterers), or doing piecework, or helping to prepare the meals. For such work, they are paid the same rates as Hong Kong's prisoners. They can spend their money on cigarettes or Cokes—but not on liquor, which is forbidden, for the authorities fear what drunkenness might provoke.

The more ambitious refugees attend English classes. As I slip into an advanced class, a dozen students ranging in age from twelve to thirty are parroting sentences that, inside the high metal fences of Chi Ma Wan Detention Center, sound like lines from a scene written by an absurdist playwright.

"I want some seats for Tuesday night. Are there any left?" the class choruses, then answers in unison: "No, there are no seats left. Every seat is reserved."

Other camp residents will be hanging out with their friends. It is hard, the refugees say, to make new friends—hard to know who can be trusted—and there are mixed feelings when friends leave for new lives in the West. Single men regularly seek out women, because they are lonely or because they have learned that bachelors are least likely to be selected for resettlement. Families are formed and grow here. The birthrate in the refugee camps is three times higher than among the residents of Hong Kong.

They would be imprisoned, cut off from international organizations, and denied any possibility of resettlement in the West, held until Vietnam could be persuaded to take them back.

New arrivals sit quietly at the reception center, the quonset hut closest to the camp's guarded front gate. There are 228 newcomers here on the day I arrive, ranging in age from two months to seventy-five years. For several days, their personal histories will be reviewed and they will be screened for diseases. Contagion is a real concern in such close quarters: already this year there has been an outbreak of measles, and a hepatitis epidemic is always feared. The newcomers are lined up in neat rows waiting to be interviewed, their heads wrapped in white towels to delouse them.

At any time except during meals—standard prisoner's fare—many of the refugees will be in their numbered cubicles. There, they talk or sit silently or sleep away the day. There is no rule requiring this, though the refugees do have to line up for muster every morning at seven o'clock. But nearly one-third of the residents, the so-called long-stayers, have been here for more than five years, and most of them no longer see much reason for activity.

These long-stayers were typically fishermen or housewives or farmers in their homeland. They have no special skills and speak only Vietnamese. They have no relatives in the resettlement countries, which long ago picked through their files and turned them down. Now the West exists for them only in their blurriest dreams. Like children who remain in orphanages as teenagers, they sense that they have lost whatever appeal they might once have possessed.

Occasionally there are flare-ups. The week before my visit, a man stabbed his wife when he learned she was having an affair. Old hostilities between North and South Vietnamese, and between Vietnamese and ethnic Chinese, have been replayed here with fists and knives. But violence is infrequent—during my stay, the prison cells that house rule-breakers were empty—and invariably violence is turned inwards, refugee against refugee. There has never been a riot here, not even a protest. It is rare to hear even the mildest criticism of the authorities. In Pakistan, the Afghan refugees talk of revolution and in the camps of Gaza the Palestinians practice it, but Chi Ma Wan Detention Center is so quiet that I wonder whether its occupants are in a trance.

A 1988 Hong Kong Correctional Services department report estimates that 850 of the refugees are "vulnerable to psychological problems as a result of being rejected"—turned away by the very Western countries that, at a 1979 Geneva conference sponsored by the United Nations High Commission on Refugees (UNHCR), promised to provide housing for those fleeing Vietnam "as long as the problem lasts." To spend time in these camps is to encounter the sadness of accumulated thwarted hopes, the numbed despair of voiceless human beings whose fate depends absolutely on the judgment of faraway officials. To the refugees, those officials must seem as awesome, as mysterious and perverse, as the gods.

Though the refugees generally do not articulate these feelings, they slip out in the diaries that Ann Cusack, an Australian who teaches English at the camp, encourages her students to keep. One man, a 26-year-old former engineer named Le Tuan Hung, writes of sitting at the camp's wire fence imagining that he is talking to himself as a 12-year-old boy growing up in Vietnam.

"What are you doing now?" the boy inquired. "I am a refugee and I lost everything from my childhood, my country, my relatives, and even my freedom." "I don't believe you," he shouted, and ran away. I hailed him, a pitiful Vietnamese boy, and all at once I awoke. I find that I am still sitting near the high wire fence and it's raining, some drops of water have fallen on my face, cold through my heart.

Pham Xuoi—Inmate Number One of Hong Kong's Chi Ma Wan Detention Center as he is listed in the records, the first of the boat people to be confined here, in July of 1982—sits motionless during our half-hour talk. When I ask him through an interpreter why he fled Vietnam and what the weeks on the South China Sea were like, how he passes his days and where he hopes to settle, intrusive interviewer's questions, he answers dutifully but listlessly, the tone of his voice never rising or falling.

The small office we occupy, furnished with a gray metal desk and gray straight-backed metal chairs, is stripped of character but not of significance. Several days a month in this room and identical offices down the hall, junior-level diplomats from Canada, Australia, Britain, and the United States—the only nations still admitting any Vietnamese refugees—assess the suitability of the would-be immigrants. The refugees sometimes bring the interviewers pieces of bone or dog tags they say come from MIAs, in the misplaced hope that these offerings will

John H. Tinker

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help their cause. It is here that, more than once, Pham Xuoi has been interviewed and rejected: he owes those interviews in no small measure to his being Inmate Number One.

"This place is boring," says Pham Xuoi. "It feels like prison." He takes typing, pounding away at a battered manual, and he fitfully studies electricity, in hopes that those skills will boost his slim chances of getting out. Last fall, a Canadian official interviewed him but he has heard nothing since. His brother recently arrived at Chi Ma Wan and the two of them spend all their time together. "I was happy at first when he came, yet he had no hope in the future." Where does Pham hope to go? "Anyplace but Vietnam . . . just let me go," he says. And then he asks, as if in afterthought: "Can you do anything to help?"

No one at Chi Ma Wan, certainly not its very first inmate, really expects miracles. Too many people like me have come and gone over the years, and too little has come of their visits, for that. But some camp residents will make it to the West. I meet one of them, Teo Phan Van, who learned English during his six years here and is now teaching in the adult school. He has tentatively been accepted by Canada, and his exuberance during our discussion is worlds removed from the prevailing passivity.

To the refugees, there is always the remote possibility that I am that Very Important Person who can personally rescue another Teo, which is why otherwise silent Vietnamese men and women greet me enthusiastically. People stare, hands reach out to touch me, and the braver ones who know some English pause to say something. When I walk into a classroom, the students stand to greet me as if I were Mr. Chips. I feel like an imposter at those moments, an abuser of dreams.

A small minority of these thousands of refugees will actually be resettled. "If they've got good documentation—benefits papers, IDs, proof of family ties—approval is short and sweet," says Bob Wing, the American consulate's earnest young refugee officer, who is at Chi Ma Wan interviewing what he calls the problem cases.

Like children who remain in orphanages as teenagers, they sense that they have lost whatever appeal they might once have possessed.

Wing carefully enumerates the priorities laid out in the 1980 Refugee Act—political dissidents, people with close U.S. ties—and the cross-cutting preferred categories—Catholics, ex-military personnel. It is a complex set of rules, Wing acknowledges, and there are inconsistencies in their application. Take the case of 39-year-old Ho Kinh, a corporal in the South Vietnamese Army whose face has been disfigured by shrapnel that also scrambled his brain. He fled, Ho says, because the Communists treated him badly, and he has been at Chi Ma Wan for six years. (When I inquire about Ho, Wing says that "there were too many holes in his story the first time around." But after three or four conversations with Ho, Wing is beginning to believe his account.) The case of a woman named Lei is relayed to me by one of the camp officials. Although she has six family members living in the United States, her application was turned down last fall.

As recently as 1981, over 12,000 Vietnamese left Hong Kong for the U.S. But last year the United States admitted just 333. One reason advanced for this sharp decline is that in the past most of the refugees came from South Vietnam, but three-quarters of the new arrivals come from the North. You might think that American diplomats would appreciate why someone would flee Vietnam—after all, the war we fought against that government was defended as a Wilsonian-style crusade for freedom—but the diplomats see things differently. These migrants, it is said, are unlikely to have what the Refugee Act calls a "well-founded fear of persecution." They are merely economic migrants—nothing more than Vietnamese wetbacks.

This distinction, however, regularly collapses under its own weight. In one instance, U.S. officials determined that, of four Vietnamese brothers whose father had worked with the U.S. forces during the Vietnam war, two were political refugees and two were economic migrants. And the desire for a better life isn't the only thing motivating these refugees. In January 1988, after interviewing 1,500 boat people in Thailand, most of them from the North, the UNHCR concluded that three-quarters had been disenfranchised for political or ethnic reasons, and that their children's futures were similarly threatened.

John H. Tinker

In my interviews and in the diaries, a single theme is tirelessly reiterated: unequivocal hatred of the Communist regime in Vietnam. Le Tuan Hung, the young engineer, writes:

> Under the Vietnamese Communist regime, which is wicked, oppressive and dictatorial, people have no right to say what they think, their property can be seized at any time, and many people have been revenged by killing or confinement. I could not live under this regime, so I with my family risked our lives to leave Vietnam for our freedom. On the way to Hong Kong our boat faced typhoons, rough waves and a lack of food and water. But we never thought of returning to Vietnam. Our only choice was freedom or death.

Once these words would have rung sweet, but fashions in ideology change. In the era of perestroika—*doi moi*, as the Vietnamese say—such blunt anti-Communism sounds as dated as the reveries of Rip Van Winkle to the sensitive ears of the diplomats. Yet when a government treats its people as cruelly as Vietnam has in matters of religion and politics and privacy, even as it exposes them to the real possibility of mass famine—and when it regards flight as a traitorous act that demands, at the least, extensive "re-education"—it is impossible to construct a bright line that can separate an economic migrant from a political refugee. What distinguishes the Vietnamese boat person from the Soviet Jew seeking to start over in America?

On the ferry back from Chi Ma Wan I spot a police cruiser racing across the harbor, carrying its familiar human cargo to Green Island reception center, the Ellis Island of Hong Kong. On board are a dozen Vietnamese, the latest arrivals. They sit passively with their heads buried in their knees. These refugees will learn to cultivate that passivity as a psychological stratagem, a stay against madness during the indefinite term they will spend behind the fences of Hong Kong's closed camps.

FEBRUARY 1989:
"THE BUNG IN THE BOTTLE"

In the months after June 15, 1988, Chi Ma Wan came to seem like a little piece of heaven to the refugees who had been living there. The camp was vacated to house those new arrivals who, unless found to be "genuine" refugees, would eventually be returned to Vietnam. The hope had been that the June 15 edict would stop the boat people, but over the next three months, 10,500 more had arrived, and they filled Chi Ma Wan and another of the camps. Meanwhile the old occupants of Chi Ma Wan, Inmate Number One and all the others whose stories I had listened to, were resettled in a hastily completed center, San Yick, an 11-story factory building in an industrial section of Hong Kong.

These new distinctions among kinds of refugees made sense only to the politicians. They separated families: in several instances, veterans of the South Vietnamese Army found themselves in San Yick while their families, who had arrived a few days later, were inaccessible in the detention camps. They prompted outbreaks of violence—even that rarity, a protest demonstration—and accusations of brutality toward the Vietnamese by their keepers were confirmed in an official inquiry. The haste with which new San Yick facilities had to be provided meant unimaginable new privations.

For months, these refugees—as

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many as 5,000 of them—lived in squalor, three and four to a bed. Theoretically, they were eligible for resettlement, but they were entirely cut off from the outside. There wasn't enough water in San Yick for drinking and washing—plumbing hadn't been completed before the Vietnamese moved in—and fights over water developed among the occupants. The building smelled of human waste because the few working toilets regularly overflowed. Festering rubbish and pools of fetid standing water were cleaned up only when Princess Anne, patron of the Save the Children Fund, appeared in September to express her interest in what the youngsters were acquiring by way of an education. Residents were confined to the building day and night. The only natural light they received came from the steel-barred windows, and refugees would line up for a glimpse of the sun.

A UNHCR report on conditions at San Yick minced no words in describing these horrors. It also specified the medical consequences of the treatment the refugees were suffering: disease at epidemic proportions among the young, many of whom were malnourished, lethargic, and showing signs of degenerative illness; adults fearful of venturing from their bunks; muscular wasting; respiratory problems; slow healing of cuts due to lack of fresh air; rickets attributable to a lack of vitamin D from sunlight; lack of adequate sleep due to the constantly burning bright lights and incessant noise both inside and outside the building. It is as if these refugees, locked away for months and years in Chi Ma Wan, were being punished again for the crime of being inconvenient.

"The bung in the bottle": that is how Nigel French, a career civil servant in Hong Kong and the refugee coordinator in the Security Branch, described his adopted home when I met with him last June. Hong Kong used to pride itself on its treatment of the Vietnamese refugees—used to say how much more humane it was than Thailand, where boatloads of refugees were pushed back to the sea—but what the Crown Colony does is almost entirely determined elsewhere, in London and Geneva, in Washington and Peking and Hanoi. No country is still acting on the principle of the 1979 Geneva accords, that all the boat people would be relocated to the West: numbers, and compassion fatigue, have outstripped commitment. While the British recently agreed to take 500 more refugees—a pittance—the United States recently reduced the number it is willing to accept.

Smarting from the international criticism leveled at conditions in San Yick, the Hong Kong government announced plans to build a new open center for all the refugees who came before June 15, to be opened in the spring of 1989. There would be no fence surrounding this camp, no guards to keep the Vietnamese in. The adult refugees would be free to work in the local area during the day, just like those who had arrived before 1982 and already lived in open camps, while the children would be educated at two UNHCR-run schools outside the camps.

Despite a desperate labor shortage, many Hong Kong residents attacked this plan. They resent the financial burden the refugees pose: more than $100 million during the past decade, much of it for guards and fences. They resent even more the refugees themselves, who have been allowed to stay in Hong Kong when their own relatives who slip across the border are promptly arrested and sent back to China. The local council in the neighborhood where the new open camp is to be situated threatened hunger strikes; when Princess Anne appeared, councillors tried to present her with a petition with 10,000 signatures demanding that the camps stay closed. A poll showed 65 percent of Hong Kong's residents favored the drastic expedient of pushing the refugees' boats out to sea. One councillor had an equally draconian alternative: "Charter a liner and sail them all to San Francisco where they will be duly unloaded into the ocean, and watch the rescue operation of the American government."

More than 10,000 Vietnamese have been trapped in Hong Kong by the new policy of not automatically granting asylum to the boat people. In theory, they are all being interviewed to determine who among them count as genuine refugees; in fact, however, that game seems to be largely rigged. In June, Hong Kong officials predicted that 10 percent of the new arrivals would turn out to be refugees fleeing persecution, not illegal economic migrants; and sure enough, just fifty-four of the first 529 have been recognized as refugees.

Approximately 100 Vietnamese will shortly be returning to Vietnam, the first volunteers to be repatriated. The Vietnamese government, badly strapped for funds, has softened its tone in recent days, promising the UNHCR that it would punish only those who traffic in refugees, not countrymen returning voluntarily. Britain, which greased the wheels of the agreement with about £70,000 in cash (an amount matched by the government of Hong Kong), supposedly to defray the refugees' resettlement costs, plainly hopes that if this first lot is well treated, more will choose the same path. But fewer than 300 of the newcomers are willing to go back; and as Peter Gill reports in a recent London *Spectator* article, visitors to the detention camps receive petitions written in blood from Vietnamese who say they will never return.

Humane deterrence, the principle behind the 1982 closing of the camps, failed to keep the Vietnamese from coming to Hong Kong. The new policy is avowedly tougher and less humane, but not clearly an effective deterrent. What is next? Will Vietnam and Britain meet at Geneva this year (as seems likely) to initial a new agreement forcing the boat people, who risked their lives once in escaping from Vietnam, to make another dangerous journey—this one back home? □

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Andy Stark

CANADIAN CONUNDRUMS: NATIONALISM, SOCIALISM, AND FREE TRADE

Last fall's election campaign in the Great White North was a showcase of left-wing inferiority and illogic.

As scores—perhaps hundreds—of Americans now know, Canadians went to the polls on November 21 of last year and re-elected the Progressive Conservative government of Prime Minister Brian Mulroney.[1] The central—in fact, the only—campaign issue was the proposed Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement, a deal that the government had painstakingly negotiated over the preceding three years and for which it was now seeking the ratification of the voters; a deal that in turn had been bitterly opposed not just by the leader of the opposition Liberal party, John Turner, and the leader of the socialist New Democratic party (NDP), Ed Broadbent, but—with particular vehemence—by what have long been referred to as the "nationalist" wings of Canada's academic, artistic, media, and organized-labor communities. This "nationalism"—which has for so long dominated Canadian intellectual life, and which so determined the course of the campaign—is utterly unique the world over; unique not just, as one would suppose, in content, but also in form.

True, like many Third World nationalisms, the creed that goes by the name of nationalism in Canada is predominantly left wing, and like them, it is left wing in large measure because it is rooted in anti-Americanism. Yet while Third World anti-American left-wing nationalism is prideful, assertive, and aggressive, Canada's is notoriously diffident, modest, and reserved. And this, in turn, is the case simply because, while in those other countries pride, assertiveness, and aggressiveness are seen as attributes of nationalism, in Canada they are seen as attributes of Americanism.

Seymour Martin Lipset put the point more precisely when he recently called attention to

> the effects of a new nationalism north of the border, one which has produced a more radical literature. But ironically . . . these changes are making Canada and her future more American, involving, as they do, a greater emphasis on values such as pride in country, self-reliance, individualism, independence, and self-confidence.

An independent, prideful, self-reliant, self-confident Canadian culture is unique and distinct—by definition. A Canadian culture of independence, self-reliance, and self-confidence, however, is no longer unique: it is just like the American. For the last twenty-five years, what is commonly called Canadian "cultural and economic nationalism" has been torn by a love of strength, confidence, and assertiveness as long as they remain in the adjectival mode, but an aversion to them as soon as they slip into the form of nouns. (During the Michael Deaver trial, which was widely publicized in Canada, legal counsel repeatedly referred to the Canadian government—one of Deaver's clients—as an "alien power." A New Democratic M.P. took offense at the term, but, as it turned out, it wasn't the use of the word "alien" to describe Canada that bothered him—that word, after all, betokens a respectable distance between the two countries—it was the word "power.") If our strength becomes too excessive, the thinking goes, we begin to lose our distinctiveness; while a certain type of weakness itself becomes a mark of uniqueness.

Socialists, of course, have theoretical problems with nationalism, and it is the peculiar way in which these problems have been hammered out in Canada that explains the paradoxes of our nationalism. In a famous 1967 manifesto addressed to Canadian socialists—"On the Fear of Nationalism"—the University of Toronto political scientist Gad Horowitz attempted to reassure his audience that in Canada nationalism is the friend, not the enemy, of socialism. Horowitz offered such reassurance on two grounds: First, he acknowledged, while as a general proposition "nationalism has bathed the world in blood," Canadians need not fear the consequences of their own nationalism, for

> there is no unique set of Canadian values which is to be . . . imposed on [others] by forceful persuasion. . . . It needn't be uniquely Canadian as long as it isn't a copy of the United States. [Otherwise,] it could be anything. It could be a replica of Sweden, or, if you like, North Korea, Albania or Ireland, or Spain or Yugoslavia, or Cambodia or all of them.

In other words, Canada poses no threat to itself or to the world in being assertive, prideful, aggressive, because there is nothing unique or distinctive about our values. If there were, then our nationalism would be truly dangerous—chauvinistic, racist, doctrinal.

And in the second place, Horowitz wrote, "Canadian socialists are nationalists because they are socialists. If the United States were socialist, then we would be continentalists at this moment." In other words, if there were no danger of its becoming aggressive, competitive, and prideful, Canada needn't remain unique and distinct, for in such a situation, Americanism would no longer be dangerous. We can be strong and forceful and proud only if there is nothing unique about us (indeed we can even "replicate" other nations). And if the Americans abandon the socioeconomy of force and pride, we needn't remain unique and distinct any longer. This is an exceedingly circumscribed nationalism, to say the least.

Yet Horowitz has here captured, albeit in a purposefully arch way, the

[1]Members of the Liberal party have often made fun of the term "Progressive Conservative" for what they take to be its oxymoronic quality; it should thus be borne in mind that at the time of Canada's Confederation, the faction that was to become the Liberal party went by the name of the "Clear Grits."

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only terms on which socialists can in theory be nationalists in Canada, and the terms on which most of those who call themselves "nationalists" in Canada are in fact socialists. So compelling are those terms that they have colored the epigrams of national self-definition authored by Canada's most prominent writers, even those who are not socialists:

- "Americans worship success, Canadians find it in slightly bad taste. In fact Canadians find Canadians in slightly bad taste. . . . One could sum up the respective stances by saying that the typical American is . . . unthinkingly and breezily aggressive and the Canadian . . . peevishly and hesitantly defensive . . ." (Margaret Atwood).
- "America's strengths as a state are its gravest flaws. Canada's weaknesses as a state are its greatest virtues . . . we [Canadians] pride ourselves on our ironic modesty" (George Woodcock).
- "Imagine a Canadian Dream which implied that everybody in the world ought to share it! Imagine a Committee on Un-Canadian activities! You can't. Un-Canadianism is almost the very definition of Canadianism" (Hugh Hood).
- ". . . this refusal to admit to the possession of a soul is itself evidence of the kind of national soul we have . . . it is a wistful, reticent, self-doubting soul" (Robertson Davies).
- "On the evidence so far you might say that we have constructed a national character by refusing to construct one . . . perhaps the refusal to admit achievement is an achievement in itself" (Bruce Hutchison).

Naturally, anyone imbued with this form of nationalism—and that, by and large, has come to mean a preponderance of those among Canada's "political and cultural elites," who describe themselves first and foremost as "nationalists"—would be opposed to a deal meant to reinforce and entrench the country's economic ties with the United States. The election results were thus in no small measure a rebuke to this kind of nationalism, even as they heralded the emergence of a new, less trammeled variety; this seems especially so when one considers that the only other "issue" that might have profoundly influenced the voters' behavior *en masse*—the personalities of the two main protagonists, Mulroney and Turner, as they were conveyed through the media—did not, for much of the campaign, go in the prime minister's favor. Here, the central events were two three-hour debates between the party leaders, the first in French and the second in English, held on October 24 and 25.

Mulroney and Turner went into the debates with conspicuously different—in fact, diametrically obverse—handicaps. In the London *Spectator* of May 28, 1988, the Canadian writer John Ralston Saul, a fierce critic of the trade agreement, attacked Mulroney for what Saul took to be the prime minister's "melodramatic 'tone' [of voice] which leave[s] an impression of insincerity." Saul's comment typifies the major journalistic attack to which the prime minister had been subjected for some two to three years prior to the election; it draws upon a reality of contemporary democratic politics, whereby "little things"—tone of voice, style of podium, mode of travel—have somehow become the text through which we read the innermost facts of a public man's character. And this is precisely the kind of reading to which Mulroney fell victim in the aftermath of the debate: Jamie Lamb of the *Vancouver Sun* wrote that the prime minister's "biggest problem was . . . his voice. Words and thoughts that would be perfectly acceptable on paper, perhaps even laudable, sounded pretentious and insincere when he voiced them."

"America's strengths as a state are its gravest flaws. Canada's weaknesses as a state are its greatest virtues."

While the prime minister's "style," and not the substance of his record and platform, became the portal through which the media chose to view his sincerity, Turner concluded—and was helped by the press to do so—that his ability to cultivate a trumpeted, manifested sincerity would be taken for mastery of the substance of the issues at hand, and not for what it actually was—pure stylization. The link Turner had to forge between personal conviction and policy command was made apparent in the dismal results of a 1986 survey, and quoted in Greg Weston's election-eve biography of the Liberal leader, *Reign of Error*. One Montrealer canvassed declared, "I think [he's] phoney . . . I am sure he doesn't understand everything he [says]. I don't think Turner could answer a question in the Commons. I don't think he could make any relation to what he [says]." According to Weston, poll respondents found Turner patently "insincere" even when talking about his personal life and "frantic in his approach to get people to believe him," results that are not surprising considering that the Liberal leader routinely referred to Parliament as "bullshit theatre" and announced that he had adopted "sovereignty" as the keystone of his campaign because "it sells well in the sticks."

No wonder, then, that the predebate consensus—in the words of the *Montreal Daily News*—was that Turner "had to get passionate about his subject"; he had to engineer an inner intensity; indeed he had to display a sincerity so emphatic that it would either marginalize or compensate for any misstatements (and there were many) he would make on the substance of his topic. In the event, he succeeded in doing so beautifully: "More important" than the state of his "knowledge" about the trade deal, declared columnist Marjorie Nichols, is the fact "that Turner believes passionately that it will wreck the country. It really is the cause of his life." In an inversion of Jamie Lamb's verdict on the prime minister's debate performance, the *Toronto Sun* allowed as to how, although Turner was "dishonest and wrong on many counts" he nevertheless spoke with "sincere conviction." "Turner goes on the attack, but sincerely," announced a headline in the *Ottawa Citizen*. Edward McWhinney, a noted political scientist, praised Turner for "regain[ing] his personality" in the debates, and Robert Fife of the *Toronto Sun* exulted that Turner "found a new meaning to his life. . . . He really is a new man, all because of free trade." A "worker" canvassed in New Brunswick found a "vast improvement by Turner. He appears to be getting desperate, almost to the point of panic in trying to get people to oppose free trade."

The language here is revealing: Turner's dishonesty was overcome by his sincerity; his desperation represented an improvement; his recovery of personality was a victory—and these were compliments. The fact that Turner had shown passion shoved the question of his credibility into irrelevance; the fact that he emoted sufficed for an argument; the fact that he cared meant that he was right. For ten days to two weeks immediately following the debate, the prime minister fell victim to the syndrome that style, not substance, is now the preferred measure of political sincerity, while Turner capitalized on the fact that a vaunted, sentimentalized, melodramatized sincerity is taken as either a sign or a substitute for substance, and not for what it really is—namely, pure stylization.

In the end, though, Turner succumbed to suspicions about his motives and sincerity four years in the making, suspicions that one night of surpassing passion could not dispel, suspicions reinforced by postdebate Conservative ads that—according to a just-released review of the campaign by a tripartite committee of pundits, Gerald Caplan, Michael Kirby, and Hugh Segal—astutely went after "not the substance of Turner's statement[s] on free trade, but his trustworthiness . . ." Consequently, in the final weeks of the campaign, Turner shifted ground and reverted to a two-pronged strategy. First, he attempted to unmask the crude, pecuniary interests lying behind the deal. "When was the last time big business spoke out in favor of a deal with such unanimity?" Turner thundered; or "big business is trying to buy this election!" And second, he took to discussing the text of the deal entirely out of its context; for example, he repeatedly noted that Canada's social programs are not explicitly exempted by the agreement from U.S. countervail—which is true—but only because the GATT Subsidies Code exempts them, and the trade agreement itself was concluded pursuant to—really, just a large codicil of—GATT's Article Twenty-Four.

This audacious, breathtaking, almost virtuosic combination of the traditionally incompatible approaches of crude reductionism and blithe acontextualism in textual interpretation would have landed Turner a tenured chair in political theory at any major university on the continent, but it wasn't sufficient for him to save the election. Nor was it sufficient for him to lose the election; for at the heart of the failure of the anti-free trade forces was the enduring problem of Canada's ideology of left-wing nationalism. The trade debate presented that nationalism, often so intractable at the best of times, with an unprecedented array of complications.

Consider just two instances—minor chords, really, but revealing nonetheless—of Canadian "nationalism's" recent confrontation with the trade deal: in an October editorial, Canada's *Financial Post* noted that a central strand in the antideal liturgy had it that, with the advent of the agreement, American capitalism would press the Canadian government to jettison a battery of Canadian social programs—and especially Canada's system of socialized medical insurance—on the grounds that such programs constitute state "subsidies" to Canadian business, and as such are likely to place American business at a competitive disadvantage. "The heavy weight of the American republic will be . . . against us," Turner warned in the debate, as we try to "protect our social programs" from their "definition of subsidies."

On other occasions, though, the foes of the agreement contended that any

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pressure to abandon Canada's social programs and "harmonize" them with the American would issue forth from the barons of Canadian capitalism, on the grounds that the higher taxes needed to subsidize such comparatively generous programs would place *Canadian* firms at a competitive disadvantage. In the words of Liberal M.P. George Proud, "this agreement . . . is a disguised attempt by Mr. Mulroney and the big business elite of Canada to dismantle the very social programs which define and mark us as the most civilized nation in the industrial world." [2] There is, as the *Financial Post* rightly observed, an "impossible contradiction" involved in arguing that Canada's "social programs put . . . both sides at an unfair disadvantage."

There is also an additional consideration, one which was given all too little play in this leg of the debate: Canada's socialized system of healthcare financing is widely held to be not only more equitable, but more *efficient*, than the American—certainly it is if one takes as a measurement their relative costs as a percentage of GNP. As economist Thomas Courchene—no socialist—has pointed out, "The manner in which Canada finances certain social policies . . . bestows a very substantial advantage on Canadian industries, so that there will be no *internal* pressure to alter these programs." Ironically, then, Turner's and Broadbent's jeremiads (Broadbent: "As Canadian businessmen are already saying, medicare benefits in Canada must be reduced to meet U.S. standards, a country where you find thirty-six million without any form of health insurance whatsoever") were based on a remarkable failure to take pride in what is arguably one of the major, homegrown achievements of Canadian social democracy—a socialized system of health insurance that is not only more generous but less costly than the American. Or rather, Turner and Broadbent based their forebodings on a calculated refusal to acknowledge what they might have plausibly claimed as a victory scored by Canadian social democracy in reconciling equity and efficiency, in order to retain the opportunity to excoriate Canadian capitalism for being prepared—through the instrument of the trade deal—to sacrifice equity *for* efficiency. Not only do Canada's socialist nationalists have difficulty taking pride in the achievements of their nation, they have trouble taking pride in the accomplishments of their ideology as well.

[2]Only a mentality imbued with Canada's peculiar form of apologetic nationalism would leave open the possibility that there might be a more civilized nation in the *non*-industrial world.

Or, consider a second example of the tortured condition of Canadian socialist nationalism as displayed in the trade debate: Canada's socialist nationalists may well have been anti-American, but—because the very idea of antipathy, strong aversion, animus, or hostility is itself so American—they couldn't be *too* anti-American. (Nowhere was this identification of strong antipathy with Americanism so evident as in the media coverage of the two debates: Several newspapers took pride in the fact that the relatively civilized and issues-oriented tone of the Canadian debates managed to distinguish them from the characteristically American assaults on personality that were thought to have dominated the U.S. presidential encounters; when, however, in the weeks following the debates, the two main protagonists took the gloves off, the Canadian press decried the onset of "American-style campaign tactics.")

Canada's socialist nationalists may well have been anti-American, but—because the very idea of antipathy, strong aversion, animus, or hostility is itself so American—they couldn't be too anti-American.

The difficulty that the association of strong enmity with things American poses for those Canadians—socialists or not—whose nationalism is rooted in anti-Americanism is revealed in the election postmortem written for the January *Harper's* by Robertson Davies: "Signing Away Canada's Soul: Culture, Identity and the Free Trade Agreement." On the one hand, Davies voices the caveat that, over the past two years, became the all-purpose, done-to-death exculpation clause invoked by the opponents of the deal to ward off what they clearly believed to be one of the most obvious criticisms one could make of their position: our attitude, the attitude of the deal's opponents, Davies declares, is "not anti-American, it is simply pro-Canadian." On the other hand, though, after spending the next two or three pages laying the groundwork for a definition of the Canadian soul—the soul he believes has been signed away with the trade agreement—Davies sums up its essence with the words, "Americans are precisely what we are not and what we don't want to be."

On the face of it, of course, there is no reason why a meaningful difference could not exist between being anti-American, and, more plainly, being simply not American; no reason why one could just not want to be an American, without having to be actively anti-American. Yet part of what Davies understands by Americanism, he tells us in the course of his essay, is a tendency to see "one's political and moral views as superior to all others"; thus to be too violently anti-American would be too—well—American. As with Davies, opponent after opponent of the agreement rushed to assure Canadians that they were not anti-American, merely pro-Canadian, knowing that to have disclosed an unalloyed hostility would itself have been seen as too American.

This is not to say that every one of the deal's opponents managed to hide the depth of his anti-Americanism. Stephen Lewis, Canada's former ambassador to the U.N., notably called the society in which he had lived in diplomatic luxury for the preceding four years "punitive" and "vindictive"; "the U.S.," Lewis proclaimed during the campaign, "trivializes everything." In saying so, Lewis in fact trivialized himself in the Canadian debate—not by the depth of his commitment to socialism, but by the virulence of his anti-Americanism. As Edgar Z. Friedenberg said in his book *Deference to Authority: The Case of Canada* (1980), "While many Canadians doubtless feel that [the columnist] Heather Robertson, [who once] 'confess[ed] to a desire to toss a hand grenade into every American camper I pass on the highway,' herself exceeded the bounds of good taste, they might also argue that her comment simply demonstrated the degree to which the unfortunate woman, like so many of her compatriots, had succumbed to American influence already."

Thus, if Canadian socialist nationalists traditionally have had difficulty taking pride in Canada because pride itself is un-Canadian, the trade debate presented them with a new hardship: many of them felt they had to dull the edge of the anti-Americanism on which they based their definition of the Canadian character, hence blurring their vision of Canada's "uniqueness and distinctiveness"—because invidiousness itself is too American.

In contrast to this fascinating but ever more hobbled ideology, the proponents of the trade agreement asserted a banal, workaday, normal, adequate but inexcessive nationalism, the sort of nationalism that should be the legacy of any mature democracy without its having to think twice about it. In the words of the MacDonald Royal Commission on the Canadian economy (which issued its final report just as preliminary negotiations for the agreement got underway in 1985):

> The day of the apologetic Canadian is gone, and there is no reason to suppose that our present confidence will be undermined by an arrangement designed only to secure a continuing exchange of goods and services with the United States. . . . From the psychological, as from the economic point of view, protective barriers may seem, on the surface, to offer a measure of security in a harsh and uncertain environment. We must also recognize them, however, as unmistakable confessions of weakness. Until these barriers are gone, the exhilaration that can come from a true sense of maturity will remain beyond our nation's reach.

It is the nationalism underlying this statement that Canadians endorsed on November 21.

The ironies of Canadian left-wing nationalism do, though, have their redeeming flip side. They suggest that only when Canadians come to see themselves, and indeed the very idea of nationalism, through American eyes, will their neurosis dissipate. For even a magazine as genteel as the *New Yorker* had this to say of the 1987 Canadian-Soviet hockey final for the Canada Cup: "The two teams in their interaction simply lifted the game itself to an entirely new level. By the end of the series, the Canadians' play had become vastly more imaginative, skilled and elegant—more Russian—while the Soviets had become more determined, aggressive, and individual: more *Canadian*." □

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Herbert Stein

MY LIFE AS A DEE-CLINE

One of the country's great economists explains his lifelong reluctance to toe the party line.

That every boy and every gal
That's born into the world alive
Is either a little Liberal,
Or else a little Conservative!
—Gilbert and Sullivan

Gilbert and Sullivan were wrong about me. For a large part of my life, when I lived in Maryland, I was a Dee-Cline. In Maryland one could register as Democrat, Republican, or Dee-Cline. If you were a Dee-Cline you could not vote in the primaries. I was a Dee-Cline until 1964, when I registered as a Democrat in order to vote against George Wallace in the presidential primary. I am now a registered Republican but not a very hard-rock one.

I am uncomfortable with ideologies and ideologues, with people who know the answer to everything, with political parties and teams. I have been on a team from time to time, and have enjoyed it for a while, but there was always some reservation, as if that wasn't my true life and I was half an observer of what the other half of me was doing. I dislike serving on committees that are going to draft statements, because I know there is going to be something I cannot go along with. People ask me to sign petitions with which I am basically sympathetic, but there is always a sentence I cannot sign.

Surely the reasons for this attitude are largely matters of private personality in which there is no reason for others to be interested. But the reasons are partly more objective and may throw some light on the state of policy discussion today. This may explain the consistency of inconsistency and the rationality of the commitment to being uncommitted.

I don't remember having ideas about politics or public policy until I was in college. That may seem rather late, but I went to college at an early age. Anyway, I was in college from 1931 to 1935—that is, in the depths of the Depression—and my family lived in Schenectady, New York, which was terribly hard hit during the Depression. My father was unemployed for much of this time. I found only one day's work for myself during all of my vacations from college.

The state of the economy made a strong and lasting impression on me. It made me think that the economy left by itself might not work very well. It also made me think that there were a lot of poor people out there who were miserable through no fault of their own. These were the casual observations of a naive mind. A sophisticated economist and econometrician might be able to disprove them. But those ideas stuck with me.

These ideas contributed to my decision to major in economics. I thought that economics was the path to reform, and I was a reformer, what would now be called a liberal. I was ignorant of the different degrees of leftishness that existed. Some time, probably in my junior year, our college had a visit from John Strachey, a fashionable British Communist. I wrote a sarcastic article about him in the college literary magazine, because I thought that he did not know any economics, which was true, and I thought that I did, which was untrue. But we also had a visit from a vice president of the Chase Bank, and I enjoyed the thought that I had heckled him with difficult questions. So I was already neither here nor there.

After college I went for graduate study in economics to the University of Chicago, and that was another great influence in the direction of agnosticism or ambivalence, which may be a surprise to people who think of Chicago as a center of dogmatism. I did not choose Chicago because I thought it had any brand of economics different from what I would have found at any other first-rate university, but mainly because it was recommended to me by a professor to whom I was close.

I went to Chicago thinking I wanted to concentrate on labor economics, which seemed closest to the problems of the unemployed and the poor. I soon gave up that idea, however. I discovered that labor economics as it was then taught was impossibly dull, having mainly to do with the struggles of the cordwainers' union in the nineteenth century. My dissatisfaction was intensified by the fact that the courses in labor economics were taught at eight o'clock in the morning and that Colonel McCormick had arranged for Chicago to stay on daylight savings time through the winter. So it was very cold walking along the Midway to an eight a.m. class in January. More important, I discovered the marvels of "the market" and of general equilibrium. I learned about the economy as a balanced aquarium in which everything was permanent and for the best.

This discovery created a conflict for me. There was a conflict between the idea that "the market" was the best of possible systems and my observation that something was in fact quite wrong. This conflict was resolved for me by a remarkable economist, Henry Simons. The essence of his philosophy was summed up in the title of a pamphlet he had written in 1934, "A Positive Program for Laissez-Faire." The "laissez-faire" part of the title indicated a rejection of the notions of a planned economy that were then very common in the country, especially in some Washington circles. The "positive" part of the program indicated his rejection of the notion that nothing needed to be done other than to get the government out of the way. Government had a positive responsibility to create the conditions in which the benefits of the market would be realized, but this was a strictly limited responsibility. Government was not to intervene in the "heart of the market," which was the price system.

Government had three important functions in a laissez-faire system:

(1) Since the market by itself would not assure aggregate equilibrium—would not prevent inflation or unemployment—government had a responsibility to use its fiscal and monetary policies to maintain the macroeconomic conditions in which the market could work well.

(2) Since the market would not necessarily exist by itself, at least in the form in which it would yield its maximum benefits, the government had a responsibility to maintain the necessary character of the market, especially competition and the availability of information.

(3) Since the market by itself would not yield a desirable distribution of income, the government had a responsibility to affect the distribution of income in the desired direction, while interfering as little as possible with the

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workings of the market that generated income efficiently. Simons said that he found extremes in the distribution of income, as of power, "unlovely." The use of that particular word removed the subject of income inequality from arguments about efficiency and justice, and simply asserted the right of the society to have and implement a preference about the distribution of income. The use of the word "extremes" showed how far he was from the radical equalizers of his time. And expressing the same distaste for extreme inequality in the distribution of power was his warning against pushing too far any of the responsibilities he assigned to government.

Thus, Simons distinguished himself from both the conservatives and the liberals of his time. The conservative reaction was later epitomized in William Buckley's book *God and Man at Yale*, in which Buckley cites the use of Simons's work in economics courses as evidence of the radical influences at work in New Haven. On the other hand, liberals clearly regarded Simons as a conservative, one of the founders or forerunners of the Chicago school that was a synonym for conservatism in economics.

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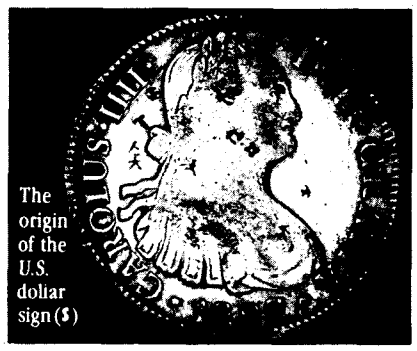

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Simons's attitude has remained a major influence on me in the fifty years since I left Chicago. Others who encountered Simons in the 1930s and were similarly influenced then have since changed their ideas significantly. Mainly they have become much less tolerant than he was of government intervention in the economy. Perhaps that is because I have spent the past fifty years in Washington, which they have not. Whether that means that I have been corrupted or that they have been insulated is not for me to say.

Simons was the colleague and protégé of another Chicago economist, Frank Knight. Simons spelled out some policy implications of Knight's economics and philosophy. Although I studied under Knight I did not at the time get much out of him. Only later did I realize how much support I would find in his writing. He was a master at the rigorous and comprehensive elaboration of the conditions implicit in the economists' model of a competitive market economy. At the same time he recognized the large gap between those conditions and the real world. Knight regarded economics as a description of how things *would* be if these conditions were fulfilled, and of how the real world *is* insofar as those conditions are fulfilled, which might not be very far. Also, he recognized, or claimed, that even if the real world did fulfill those conditions, the resulting state of the economy would not necessarily be the best conceivable or the best achievable. Thus, he left a lot of room for the *possibility* of appropriate government interventions in particular cases for particular reasons, while retaining a great deal of skepticism about government management as a general method of economic organization. Knight was an argument against dogmatism, whether "conservative" or "liberal."

It was while I was a student at Chicago that Keynes's *General Theory* was published, quickly dividing the world of economics between Keynesians and non-Keynesians. Here again the Chicagoans took a middle-of-the-road, "none of the above" point of view. They accepted much of what Keynes had to say about the short-run behavior of the economy and about short-run anti-Depression policy, only complaining that it was not new and they had always known it. But they denied that he had any general theory, and they particularly rejected the prescriptions for permanent re-ordering of the economy that some of his more devout followers drew from the book. So they were neither Keynesians nor non-Keynesians, and were excluded and rejected by both. This position I also absorbed and carried with me through much of my later life.

People ask me to sign petitions with which I am basically sympathetic, but there is always a sentence I cannot sign.

Armed with these ideas I went to Washington in 1938. There I encountered some real conservatives and liberals and became even more aware than I had been that I did not belong in either camp. I worked at the FDIC for an economist named Homer Jones, who was an alumnus of the Brookings Institution. Brookings was then the Alamo of pre-New Deal conservatism. Perhaps it is more accurate to say that some of the Brookings people, like Harold Moulton, who had been open-minded researchers before the New Deal, became sullen defenders of the past record as soon as FDR came into office. Anyway, observing their complete negativism, I felt no kinship with them.

My exposure to the Keynesians and the liberals was more intense and painful. A militant and extreme Keynesianism was coming into Washington in 1938 at about the time I came to town. This was stagnationist, holding that private investment would be permanently below the saving that would be generated at full employment and that government had to fill the gap permanently. It was redistributionist, holding that low-income people saved a smaller share of their income than upper-level income people, and that a transfer of income from rich to poor was a good way to overcome the secular excess of saving. It had also absorbed a desire for a variety of government investment programs and other government interventions, even though that was not readily deducible from Keynes's theory.

These ideas were embodied in a little book, *An Economic Program for Economic Democracy*, by seven Harvard and Tufts economists, that received much attention in 1938. The ideas attracted a lot of publicity from testimony by Alvin Hansen and others before the Temporary National Economic Committee in 1939. And they were the unifying doctrine of a group of politically active economists in the Department of Commerce, the Budget Bureau, the Federal Reserve, and the Treasury. They were an ideological and social "set," and I did not belong to it, ideologically or socially.

My difference from all those people became most acute in 1940 and 1941 when I became involved in questions of defense economics. I joined a team of economists in the Price Stabilization Division of the National Defense Advisory Commission. We regarded as our objective the avoidance of inflation during the defense buildup, without resort to price controls. Toward the end of 1940, the head of the division, Leon Henderson, took on another team of economists, who were equally devoted to the idea that price controls were essential. A struggle went on between these two teams during much of 1941. Finally the price-controllers won. This left me with the feeling not only that I was not a member of the Keynesian liberal team but also that they were my enemies.

The war had another important effect on my thinking insofar as it is measured on the liberal-conservative scale. It made me a consistent supporter of defense expenditures and especially resistant to the idea that defense spending in the United States had to be severely limited by ideas of what we could afford. In 1940 and 1941, there was a debate in Washington about the scale of our defense buildup. Many believed that it had to be kept small because of the budgetary and economic costs. I was firmly of the opinion that there was no cost to building up the defenses rapidly which could be nearly as great as the cost of failing to do so. After Pearl Harbor it became clear that we had been nowhere near economic limits to our defense program and that we would have been much better off if we had rearmed more rapidly.

I think that I have not neglected the

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logical point that defense, like other good things, has its costs and that at some point the costs are not worth bearing. But I have been terribly impressed by the costs of being unprepared militarily, and terribly unimpressed by the magnitude of the costs when the defense program is of the size that has been under consideration ever since World War II. This attitude toward defense put me at odds with the "liberal" community after Vietnam. But in a peculiar way it also put me at odds with much of the "conservative" community. It made me unable to accept the view that government spending *per se* is bad and that limits should be placed on total government spending. It created for me the possibility that if total spending is limited by some general ceiling, defense spending might be cut too much, and the adverse consequences of that would exceed whatever gains there might be from the limitation of total spending. Also, if I accept the proposition that defense spending may be too low, I am unable to accept the proposition that there is some flaw in the political process that universally makes government spending too high. And if I accept that exception for defense spending I am bound to ask whether other kinds of expenditures may fall into the exceptional category also, and be too low.

This attitude makes it impossible for me to go along with conventional conservative strictures about government spending. But that in turn makes it impossible for me to go along with conventional strictures about taxation. One of the arguments in favor of low taxation most commonly used by conservatives is that if taxes are higher "they" (Congress, or politicians generally) will spend more. But if you think some of the additional spending will be for purposes for which spending would otherwise have been too low, you cannot be sure that increasing taxes causes a net loss.

But I am getting ahead of my story. At the end of the war I went to work for the Committee for Economic Development, and there I felt that I was a member of a team, at least for about ten years. But it was the kind of team that especially appealed to me because it was itself outside the main ideological and political groupings of the time. CED was an organization of businessmen, but they were unorthodox businessmen, rebelling against the business establishment of the time, as represented by the National Association of Manufacturers and the U.S. Chamber of Commerce. CED had a strong University of Chicago orientation, and the idea behind it originally came from discussions at Chicago. The first chairman and guiding spirit, Paul Hoffman, was a trustee of the university. One of the leading members, Beardsley Ruml, had been dean of the social sciences at Chicago, and the first director of research, T. O. Yntema, was a professor at Chicago. (The next two research directors, Howard Myers and I, were also products of the University of Chicago.) My mentor, Henry Simons, wrote a report on taxation for the CED.

Paul Hoffman described the position of the CED as "neither left nor right, but responsible," and that became the watchword of the organization. Basically its policy position was what I have described as the position of Henry Simons. It asserted an active role for government in maintaining high employment and economic stability by the use of its fiscal and monetary policies. Its fiscal policy was, as I later called it, "domesticated Keynesianism," relying on Keynesian analysis but rejecting as unworkable the fine-tuning prescriptions of Keynes's more devout followers. But on "micro" matters CED was strongly free-market, opposing price controls (which was an issue at the end of the war) and opposing protectionism (which would be a continuing issue).

This Keynesianism, even though tempered, and this free-trade attitude irritated the conventional business leadership. At the same time CED was not embraced by the orthodox Keynesians and liberals. The standard attitude of mainstream economists of the time was that CED was pretty good for a group of businessmen, and certainly better than other businessmen, but not really liberated from old taboos and interests.

The CED position of being outside both the business mainstream and the economists' mainstream, and of having consciously chosen to be outside, was very congenial to me. The situation did not last, however. CED was to be a victim of its own success. The Committee had been formed originally by a group of maverick businessmen who were not the heads of the largest corporations. But as the CED received increasing amounts of attention and seemed to have influence on public and official thinking, it attracted more and more leaders of the big corporations. Consequently, the Committee became more and more conventional. This did not mean the members became more "free-market." On the contrary, on some matters they became less so. For example, in a statement on inflation in 1958 they insisted, despite my arguments, on making an appeal for voluntary restraint on wage and price increases that I regarded as a dangerous opening toward price and wage controls. During work on a statement about labor relations it became clear that many members were not concerned about the power of unions as long as all the firms in an industry dealt with the same union and had the same contract. An attempt to write a policy statement about antitrust policy turned out to produce a sermon on the social responsibility of business. I felt that the ideology of the CED was becoming the fashionable liberalism of, for example, the editorial page of the *New York Times*.

This attitude makes it impossible for me to go along with conventional conservative strictures about government spending.

So, after about 1957 I became more and more disaffected with CED. At the same time I found no other attachment. I was still identified with an organization of businessmen that everyone considered "conservative."

My homelessness was evidenced by two incidents in 1964. During the Johnson-Goldwater campaign the word "conservative" had the same implications of danger to the nation that the word "liberal" was to have in the Bush-Dukakis campaign, and with about as little reason. I tried to clarify the situation with an article in the *Washington Post* entitled "Varieties of Conservatism: Wall Street, Main Street and the University of Chicago." This was not only an effort at exposition. It also distanced me from the Wall Street variety, which fairly described the CED, and the Main Street variety, which fairly described the Republicans in Congress. I thought I was identifying myself with the Chicago variety. But I soon learned from a good friend at the University that I was not orthodox in that sect either. I continued to believe, following Simons, that vigorous enforcement of the antitrust laws was essential, whereas the Chicagoans of 1964 had rejected that idea. Indeed, it was to become clearer in later years that whereas I still clung to, or was stuck with, Simons's idea of the "Positive Program for Laissez-Faire," the new Chicagoans were elevating the laissez-faire aspect of that prescription and downplaying the positive program part.

But I did not fit in with the other team either. In 1964 the CED decided to give me a sabbatical for the year 1965-66, after twenty years of service. I would have the year off with full pay and could go anywhere. Having a hankering to live in Paris, I asked the Council of Economic Advisers to name me as the U.S. representative on an international committee of economists who would advise on a study of fiscal policy to be done by the Organization

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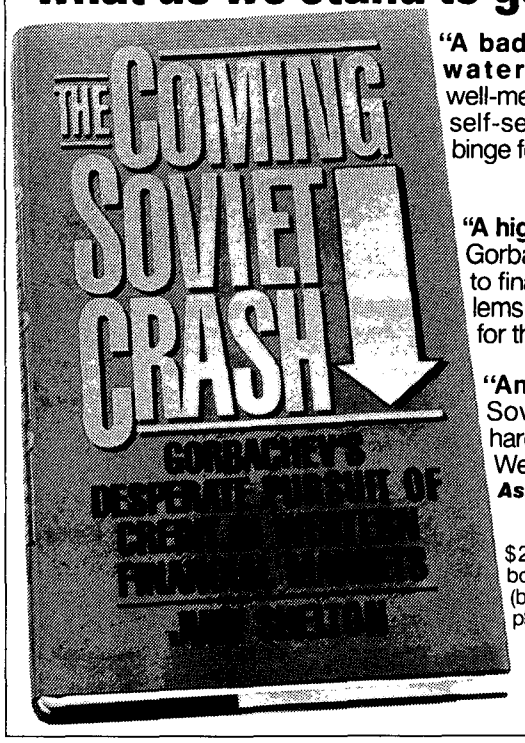

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for Economic Cooperation and Development. I thought that I had demonstrated enough expertise and objectivity on that subject to be eligible for the appointment, and I did not have to be paid. My request was denied, however. I was later told by an "insider" that I would have been appointed if I had been a "card-carrying Democrat." I do not regret missing Paris, because I did some of the best work of my career spending my sabbatical at the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, but the incident illustrated what it meant to belong or not belong to a team.

In 1967, after twenty-two years, I left the CED and moved to Brookings, which was then in a liberal phase. I chose Brookings not because of any ideological affinity—rather the contrary—but because at Brookings I could do my own thing rather than writing statements to be signed by people with whom I was not much in sympathy. But I soon found that doing my own thing, at least in that stage of my life, was unsatisfactory, not ideologically but existentially. I felt that I was missing out on the most exciting part of life in Washington, and possibly in the United States, which is the life of politics, because of my reluctance to commit myself.

Sometime in 1968 I read part of a novel (I never finished it) by Sartre about the Spanish Civil War, in which there is a conversation between a French Communist and a friend. The Communist is urging his friend to join the Party, but the friend says he is not committed. The Communist then replies: "Join and you will be committed."

In this mood I decided to join. I offered my services in the campaign for the Republican presidential nomination, characteristically, to Nelson Rockefeller, the least Republican of the Republicans. In the upshot I chaired a task force on the budget for the Nixon campaign and then joined the Nixon Administration as a member of the Council of Economic Advisers.

Although I had joined, I was not fully committed. I had just completed a history of the making of fiscal policy in the previous forty years and told myself that I was only entering the government as an observer, to be a "fly on the wall" to see how things looked from the inside. My initial intention was to take only one year's leave from Brookings, but its president, Kermit Gordon, who had been a member of the CEA in the Kennedy Administration, told me that I would not get the hang of things in less than one year. And although I did stay for five and one-half years, I was never "fully" committed. There was always part of me in observer status, expecting that the clock would strike twelve and return my car and driver to a pumpkin and mouse. Or, as I told George Shultz after one meeting in the White House, "I have the feeling that we are a troop of boy scouts invited into City Hall for a day to act as if we are the City Council."

But still, I was more committed, and felt more a part of a team, in the Nixon Administration than I have before or since. That was basically because a number of people who could not have been more different from me—starting with Richard Nixon himself—treated me as part of the team. And yet it is consistent with my attitude as I have described it that the team I joined was rather unusual. It did not have a rigid doctrine. Mr. Nixon, as I and others have said, was "a conservative man with liberal ideas." He was, after all, the proponent of revenue sharing, the Family Assistance Plan, and the Environmental Protection Agency. He supported the idea that the budget should be balanced at high employment, and took pleasure in thinking that made him a "Keynesian." He floated the dollar, removed production controls from agriculture, and initiated a round of international tariff reduction. His great sin, in the field of economics, was the imposition of price and wage controls, but he at least recognized that it was a sin. Everything could be discussed with him: there were no forbidden subjects, as increasing taxes was to be in the Reagan Administration.

Nixon was "a conservative man with liberal ideas." . . . Everything could be discussed with him: there were no forbidden subjects, as raising taxes was to be in the Reagan Administration.

When I left the government, at the end of August 1974, I was comfortable in feeling that I was part of the Republican mainstream, and that the Republican mainstream was broad enough so that being part of it imposed no serious limits to my independence of thought. However, by 1978 I found that mainstream to be too narrow. In the early days of the Carter Administration I had been asked to serve as chairman of an advisory committee on economic policy to the Republican National Committee. I declined because I did not want the responsibility it involved, but I did accept membership. I soon found myself at odds with that team. The other members of the advisory committee, and the RNC as a whole, were infatuated with the idea that reducing taxes would raise revenues and that the politically attractive promise of cutting taxes could thus be made consistent with the traditional Republican devotion to balancing the budget. I argued against this in the advisory committee and at a hearing that the RNC held, but to no avail, obviously. It was not so much that I was opposed to cutting taxes, although I was already worried about the effect of a tax cut on the defense program. Mainly I was offended by the use of the shoddy "Laffer curve" argument.

In 1980, I favored the selection of George Bush as the Republican presidential candidate, and was especially pleased that he recognized the deception in "voodoo economics." After Ronald Reagan became the candidate, I worked with an independent committee that raised $3 million on his behalf, which relieved me of any direct contact with his rhetoric. I wrote an article in the *Wall Street Journal* explaining that I was for Reagan despite his ideas about the tax cut, because I thought he would be stronger for defense and against inflation than Carter. This was a precisely limited endorsement.

After the election the administration created a committee called the President's Economic Policy Advisory Board (PEPAB), consisting of former Republican economic officials, almost all of whom had worked on the campaign. I was not initially invited to join, but I told my friend, George Shultz, who was to be the chairman, that I would like to participate, and he included me. So at the infrequent meetings that PEPAB held before it disappeared at the end of 1986, I grumbled and dissented, mainly about the tax policy but also more generally about the absence of any logical foundation for the administration's whole budget policy.

But my dissatisfaction with what had become conventional conservative Republicanism did not make me any happier with the opposition. It was too protectionist, too dovish, too inflationist, too redistributionist, and too tempted by grandiose ideas of economic planning for me. I sometimes felt that there were people commonly identified as "liberals" who were as unhappy with their team as I was with mine. I think of an article by Charles Schultze effectively debunking the idea of "industrial policy." But we were not about to form a new team called "None of the Above."

I have concentrated here on economic issues. I am aware that now the difference between liberals and conservatives is at least as much about social or moral issues as about economics. On these other matters I have less experience than on economics, but I feel about them the same ambivalence, the same inability to swallow whole the doctrine of any party or sect. These areas are filled with hard questions to which the answers are painfully uncertain. Abortion is a good example. There are heart-rending conflicts of rights and interests, and I find it impossible to say that one never or always dominates the other. So the answer probably depends on times and circumstances, which will be hard to define with confidence but will be better than "always" or "never." Capital punishment is a similar case. My "instincts" are against capital punishment—it is so irreversible. But I cannot say that Israel was wrong to make an exception and execute Eichmann. And if Eichmann, who else? Do we then logically go to chopping off the hands of purse-snatchers? Decisions have to be made, and people will disagree about what the decisions should be, but no one will have a strong claim to moral or intellectual superiority.

As time has passed I have come to recognize that my dissent from the conventional parties, ideologies, and schools is less a matter of policy than of talk. I have become less confident that I know what good policy is. Also, I have come to think that differences of policy within the range of options usually under consideration in the United States are not terribly important. Defense policy is an exception to that, but I do not pretend to know what defense policy should be. I only know that what is commonly said about the economics of the matter is nonsense.

But it is the talk, and not only from the right but also from the left, and not only from the politicians but also from the "intellectuals," that is most distressing. People routinely say with apparent certainty serious things that are if not patently false at least highly uncertain. And there is no debate, no confrontation of facts or analysis. The things people say are not meant to be measured on the scale of truth. They are only the signs by which one indicates which team one belongs to, like the "Identification-Friend-or-Foe" signals that warplanes emit. Perhaps this low quality of the discussion does not hurt, but it is surely "unlovely," in Henry Simons's favorite word of disapproval. □

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BRAKING GLASS

by Joe Queenan

It is widely known that before achieving international stardom, composer Philip Glass worked as a taxicab driver in New York City. Yet until recently, no systematic effort had been made to examine formal elements in Glass's cab driving style, or to link these elements with concurrent developments in his personal, musical language. Now, a San Francisco urban planner with a degree in musicology has published a book arguing that by 1970, Glass had evolved a highly distinctive post-minimalist cab driving style, which may itself have been a nascent form of performance art.

Before writing *Philip Glass: Post-Minimalist Cabbie*, Gabe Stookey spent sixteen months in Lower Manhattan tracking down Glass's fares, his past employers, his fellow cabbies, and officials at the Bureau of Taxi Regulation. Obviously, locating passengers after eighteen years was no mean feat, but Stookey did eventually manage to run thirteen of Glass's fares to ground. What he heard from them was astonishing: almost universal reports showing that by early 1971 Philip Glass was practicing a highly idiosyncratic, indisputably original form of cab driving such as had never before been seen in the streets of North America.

"I got in at Third and the Bowery and told him, 'Kennedy Airport—pronto!'" recalls Sol Glickman, a buyer for a Lower East Side lamp store. "He took off and I started reading the paper, but the next thing I knew we were right back at Third and the Bowery. He'd hit the gas, jerk forward fifty yards, then go into reverse and we'd be back where we started from. I thought the guy was a little meshuga . . ."

"I got Glass twice and both times I was really zonked on coke," recalls Tork Calhoun, a reporter for the now-defunct *Soho Weekly News*. "So at first I couldn't tell whether it was him or me, but after a while I noticed that we'd been around the corner of 23rd and Third sixteen times. So I tapped him on the shoulder and said, 'Hey, pal, I think we're going in circles.' And he said, 'I prefer to think of it as a fugue.'"

"Fugue schmugue," snaps Vic Antufuermo, a dispatcher for Lower East Side Taxis who had many run-ins with Glass. "If I had a nickel for every citation we got for that guy's driving people in circles—up to 57th, back to 56th, over to Madison, back to 57th. . . . It was Refund City when Glass was on duty . . ."

Jay Calcutta, who did most of the gay dispatching for East Side from 1967 until 1980 ("Pick-up at 7th & Sheridan, and get your tush over there now, sweet-pants!") but is now a transsexual bond buyer for a non-homophobic Greenwich Village investment house, recalls Glass more sympathetically.

"By the spring of '71, Philip had evolved a bold, idiosyncratic style of cab driving that he is only just now beginning to transliterate into his compositions," says Calcutta. "His driving was non-linear, asymmetrical, given to recurrent but not necessarily predictable patterns, and it was clearly not without certain aleatory elements. Of course, we had to fire him."

Stookey says that he got the idea for *Post-Minimalist Cabbie* while working on an earlier book about another famous taxi driver: Harry Chapin.

"Executives would get into Harry's cab and he'd let them have it," reports Stookey. "First he'd say, 'Mind if I put on my favorite radio station: K-R-A-P!!!!? Hey, Mr. Moneybags, ever think of spending more time with your kids? Well, the cat's in the cradle and the silver spoon, little boy blue and the man in the moon, when you coming home, dad, I don't know when, but we'll have a good time then, dad, I know we'll have a good time then.' He'd scare the hell out of those IBM guys."

Stookey continues:

"It was while I was writing *Harry the Hack* that I heard an interesting story about Glass. Apparently, after Harry's first record broke big he went to New York to do Madison Square Garden and who should pick him up at the airport but Philip Glass? Harry was late so he told Phil to step on it, but Glass, already well into this post-minimalist thing, never got out of Terminal C. Round and round and round they went for forty-five minutes. Well, Harry missed the show at the Garden and I think it hurt him careerwise. But he was a tough son of a bitch and after he realized that he couldn't make the show, he hauled Glass out of the cab and beat the living piss out of him. Glass just kept hollering 'Koyaanisqatsi! Koyaanisqatsi!' which was later used as the name of a movie with Glass's music. People think it's a Turkish or Armenian word for some mystical sensation, but it isn't. Koyanastawski was the name of a Manhattan South patrolman that cabbies would call on the horn if they ever got mugged. But Koyanastawski was off that night, so Glass got a world-class thumping."

There is one other question that demands an answer: Did Philip Glass's post-minimalist taxi driving style ever extend to his fare-collecting habits?

"Glass would charge you full fare even if he'd taken you around the same block fifty times," fumes Judith Sokoloff, a Murray Hill resident who had several run-ins with the gifted but unpredictable cabbie. "The guy really knew how to jerk around with the meter, and if you asked him for a receipt he'd start repeating, 'You should have asked when you got in, asked when you got in, when you got in, should have, you should have, got in you should have . . .' I never tipped the bastard."

"If more people *had* tipped Glass, he might never have become a composer," notes Stookey. "You have to figure out for yourself whether that's a good or a bad thing." □

Joe Queenan is a frequent contributor to The American Spectator *and other magazines.*

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TURNING AMERICA INTO JUNK

by Joe Mysak

History was made on February 9, 1989, when Kohlberg Kravis Roberts & Co., a leveraged buyout specialist, completed the biggest commercial deal ever, the $25 billion acquisition of RJR Nabisco Inc.

Such stuff once would have interested only the old fellows dozing in front of the fire at the Down Town Association, a club slightly north of Wall Street, or the boys bending an elbow at Harry's. Now the news magazines write about it, and even the kid in the cornfield knows the lexicon and can tell you about arbs, and junk bond kings, and management buyouts. After all, when you're talking $25 billion, you're talking about money, *money that buys things.* But this was the topper, an awesome marvel, the woolly mammoth of the debt-financing craze. As the bids mounted last fall, if one listened carefully, one could hear a fretful murmuring from burned bondholders, concerned lawyers, the old fellows dozing in front of the fire, the boys at Harry's, miscellaneous editorialists, the kid in the cornfield, and even members of Congress: *This is absurd. Do something about it.*

Nobody last year really thought that RJR Nabisco was worth $25 billion, but when you're dealing with funny money, numbers tend to lose their meaning. What we think of $25 billion is not the same as what the principals at KKR think of it. For them, the $25 billion amounts to $2 billion in actual equity, the cash they put up, and layers and layers and layers of loans—"leverage" in the parlance of the business, with a good deal of it consisting of high-yield, or "junk," bonds, many of which would not require payments of any kind, principal or interest, for years.

The past ten years have seen what more than a few analysts are calling the junking of America. In 1979, about $1.3 billion in junk bonds was sold. The figure climbed to $12.9 billion in 1984 and nearly $30 billion in 1988, about one-quarter of all corporate debt issued, and the third consecutive year it approached that lofty figure. The market has blossomed from one where such securities were sold mainly to finance small and untried companies, to one where junk bonds are routinely sold to finance the largest and most prestigious companies' leveraged buyouts.

The idea behind the leveraged buyout, and its concomitant staggering amount of debt, is a simple one. Smart, sharp entrepreneurs (and this can include current management), wisdom has it, can take over bloated, uncompetitive corporate giants, sell various assets (including any unrelated businesses those giants may have acquired over the years), and retain the core business, which they can proceed to run with greater efficiency. Or they can resell everything in pieces, on the theory that the sum of the parts will bring more than the whole.

In order to proceed with this plan, however, those sharpies first have to buy out a majority of the stockholders. And to do this, they put up a small amount of cash and go heavily into debt for the rest. Because they go into so much debt, their companies' bond rating dips below investment grade—Baa at Moody's Investors Services and BBB at Standard & Poor's—and becomes speculative. The lower the rating, the higher the yield on those bonds has to be. Hence junk bonds. In 1988, according to Morgan Stanley & Co. Inc.'s *High Performance* monthly magazine, junk bonds were priced to yield approximately 405 basis points, or over four points, above what comparable U.S. Treasury securities yield (about 13 percent to 14 percent at this writing).

The existing stockholders receive an unexpected bonanza as their shares triple and quadruple in price; the bondholders, who previously held securities of what they thought was a blue-chip company, watch glumly as prices plunge on their holdings (when the RJR Nabisco buyout was announced, holders of the company's $5 billion in outstanding debt lost about $150 per $1,000 in securities they held). "There are questions of a truly mammoth breach of duty" to the bondholders, economist Benjamin Stein noted at the time in *Barron's.*

Lawyers, leveraged buyout specialists, junk-bond dealers, and investment bankers walk away with bags of loot after their fees are calculated, leaving the more cynical observers to wonder whether these people care more about the deals, or just getting the deals done. Perrin Long, an analyst at Lipper Analytical Services, told *Investment Dealers Digest* earlier this year that merger and acquisition work at brokerage houses "has been the godsend of the industry in 1988. Probably about 60 percent to 70 percent of pretax earnings are coming from M&A at most firms," instead of from more traditional activities like underwriting, trading, and sales.

Leveraged buyouts, we are told, are the way to energize sluggish American companies. "In the long-term, it's good for companies," Long told me. "Most of them are underutilizing their assets. With LBOs, you have to work your assets harder." The LBO has, as one writer put it, "a disciplining effect" on executives. It also generates handsome tax benefits, because companies deduct the interest payments they make on junk bonds. And so what *Barron's* has termed "the buyout bubble" goes on, with companies piling on more and more debt, their balance sheets resembling nothing so much as a bankrupt's, their managements optimistically predicting more growth and higher and higher prices for the unproductive assets they plan to sell off.

All the while, the debt the companies sell in an LBO—junk bonds—has become even junkier, to the distress of thinking men in the market. The companies have to "wait for cash flow to grow" in order to repay their debt; they need "an interest rate holiday for a few years," said a banker at Morgan Stanley, the third-ranked underwriter of junk bonds last year. Drexel Burnham Lambert is, of course, the top firm in the field, home of Michael Milken, notorious as the Junk Bond King. Drexel underwrote seventy-three issues totaling $11.52 billion last year, a 41 percent share of the market. (Its nearest competitor, First Boston Corp., underwrote sixteen issues totaling $3.9 billion. Morgan Stanley put together eleven deals worth $3.7 billion.) Drexel, in its *High Yield Review,* recently wrote of any legislation that might be the result of the *Do something about it* backlash, "Although we don't believe legislators want to prevent minorities, women, or union employees from raising capital, enacting restrictions on high-yield financings would accomplish this since investment grade firms are not typically owned or managed by such individuals."

To get this "interest rate holiday" my man at Morgan Stanley referred to, a "standard feature" of most LBOs in the past four years has been the sale of zero-coupon junk bonds and PIK ("payment in kind") preferred stock. Investors in zero-coupon bonds buy them at a deep discount and receive no interest payments for five years or more. When their zero-coupon bond matures, they receive the principal, or face value, of the bond. This is, of

Joe Mysak is managing editor of the daily Bond Buyer.

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course, assuming the company is still around in five years, or ten years, to pay. PIK securities pay investors in additional securities, in an effort to put off the day of reckoning. Companies are still able to deduct "interest" on these securities as if they have paid it annually.

One naturally wonders about the buyers of such securities. I asked one bond investor, who spends a lot of time working for an organization that is supposed to look out for bondholders' rights, why people or institutions buy junk bonds. I mentioned one investment banker who had told me that there seems to be an equity-like risk, without the same reward. "That's not founded in fact," the investor replied defensively. "Just take a look at the numbers." He fairly glowed. But nothing seems foolhardy to investors who reach for yield. Lipper Analytical Services tracks seventy-seven high-yield junk bond funds, and the top performer for last year was Executive Investors High-Yield Fund, which had a whopping total return of 21.6 percent. The fund invests heavily in zero-coupon junk bonds. And so far, investors in junk bonds have been safe. According to *High Performance*, the average default rate on high-yield bonds during the past ten very healthy years is 2.08 percent.

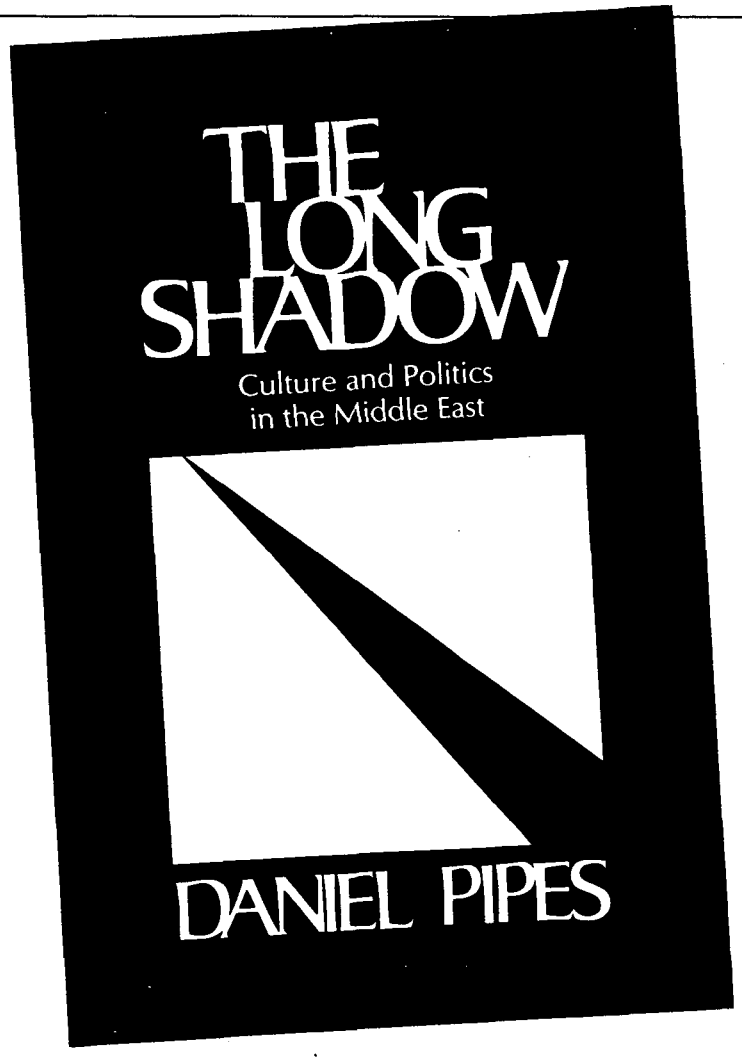
The default rate increases in lean times, of course. So do bankruptcies. But to judge just how good times have been since the junk-bond boom has taken off, just take a look at the numbers: since 1981, unemployment has gone from 7 percent to just above 5 percent; the prime rate was 20 percent and had been as high as 21.5 percent, and is now 10.5 percent. The Treasury's long bond yielded 12.25 percent, and is now under 9 percent. Industries that have been riding the boom, and selling the junkier junk bonds, would seem to have built their dreams on particularly fragile foundations. In 1988, half of the twenty-four defaults—the largest number in recent history—that occurred took place in companies specializing in energy, financial services, and leisure products. In a recession, or even a minor financial downturn, the tide presumably goes out on all boats. Is it reasonable to assume that energy, financial services, or leisure products will make a comeback during that time, because owners wish it were so? Or consider broadcasting, homebuilding, or health services; retailing or savings and loans—none seem very likely to be "growth" industries during a financial downturn, especially if they are toddling along supporting a load of high-yield debt.

Do something about it. The situation appalls. Something there is in the American character that still likes the old virtues of hard work and thrift, and bridles at the very thought of debt, let alone such massive, almost unconscionable loads of debt. Somewhere, deep down, we like to plan for winter. Congress and the Treasury are now looking at ways to do something about it.

A raft of reforms is being considered. Chief among them is a move by the Treasury Department to limit the amount of interest payments companies can deduct, based on a formula measuring a company's equity and debt. Another notion making the rounds would eliminate the current double taxation of dividends—corporations are taxed on profits, but can take no deduction for paying out dividends, which stockholders then also pay interest on. The thinking behind this one is that a change will encourage corporations to sell more stock if they are able to deduct for dividends, instead of going into hock and selling securities whose interest payments they can deduct.

One of the latest ideas on how to rein in the excesses of the junk bond market, however, is to eliminate the junkier junk that has been the mainstay of the market during the past four years, by not allowing companies to take regular deductions for interest payments when in fact they defer such payments, as is the case with zero-coupon and PIK securities. "This would get rid of the excess which has taken over the market," said Theodore J. Forstmann, a partner at Forstmann Little & Co., a leading LBO specialty firm which works with its own cash on buy-outs, and does not rely on junk bonds. "It's a good idea," said Lipper's Perrin Long. "As individuals, we can't deduct interest until we pay it. Neither should corporations."

Until Congress or the market speaks, the party goes on, the "restructuring of America" continues apace, the fantastic debt mounts. Thomas Jefferson, no stranger to debt, once sagely advised, "Never spend money before you have it." In our own day, James Grant, the proprietor of *Grant's Interest Rate Observer*, recently offered a sober analysis of our mania for "leverage": "I think there is too much debt and too much complacency about debt," he told the Management Investment Institute last fall. "I think that wealth is being pledged even faster than it is being created. I think that, whether we realize it or not, the country has capitalized itself as if prosperity were going to be permanent. I think that our infatuation with debt constitutes a kind of mass delusion, and that our grandchildren will regard the leverage boom with the same bug-eyed incredulity with which we read about tulip bulbs." All glory is fleeting. □



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Daniel Pipes

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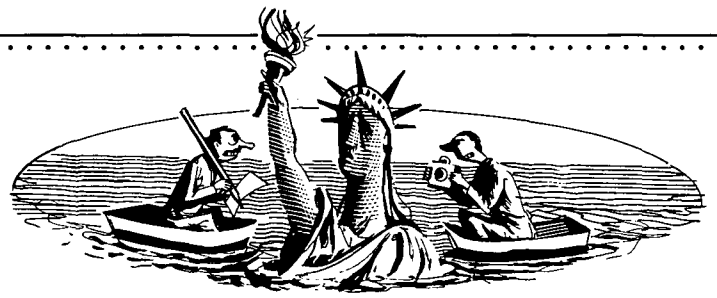


WOODWARD EXPLODES *ROE* v. *WADE*

by Terry Eastland

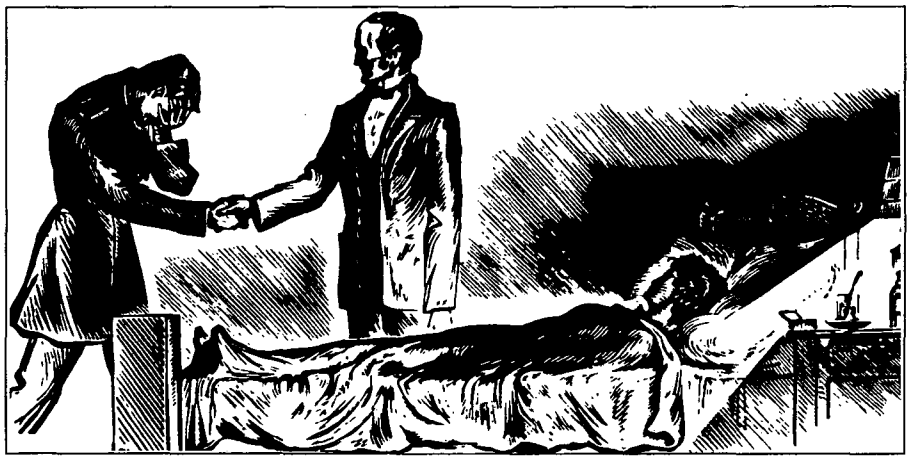
On January 22, 1989, the sixteenth anniversary of *Roe* v. *Wade*, the *Washington Post*'s Bob Woodward reported the existence of four internal Supreme Court memoranda—the kind justices compose and circulate among themselves as they hammer out opinions—that dealt with the decision and were written in the final weeks (one is tempted to say in the final trimester) before the Court announced its ruling. Woodward found the memos among personal papers that the late Justice William O. Douglas had given to the Library of Congress and that are now available to the public. What struck Woodward as especially newsworthy were the words used in memos written respectively by Justice Harry A. Blackmun, who wrote the Court's opinion in *Roe*, and the late Justice Potter Stewart, who joined the *Roe* majority. Blackmun said that he was drawing "arbitrary" lines about the times during pregnancy when a woman could legally receive an abortion; Stewart recognized that such line-drawing was "legislative" in character.

These were not words that Woodward—co-author in 1979 of *The Brethren*, an account of the inner workings of the Supreme Court—had encountered in previous reporting on the Court. Woodward told me he regarded them as "explosive" because they indicated that Blackmun and others in the *Roe* majority understood they were doing exactly what critics of *Roe*, starting with Justice Byron White in his dissent in the case, have long said they were doing—acting as a legislature, not a court. Woodward sought to convey this to readers, writing high in his story that "new evidence" had surfaced that "some of the justices who wrote and supported the opinion were," as some critics have said, "legislating policy and exceeding [the Court's] authority as the interpreter, not the maker, of law."

Notwithstanding Woodward's reputation as a reporter, his lengthy piece did not generate much interest elsewhere in the media. In fact, so far as I could tell, no one did a follow-up story. His article went as far as from here to the trash can, having a ripple effect near zero. How come?

Woodward, who said he doesn't know what he thinks about abortion but is interested in how law is made, offered this: "There are more people in the news media than not who agree with the abortion decision and don't want to look at how the sausage [of that law] was made." Doubtless bias in favor of *Roe* is part of the explanation, but other factors involving the nature and limits of journalism also played a role.

Journalism is interested, and rightly so, in how government officials think about decisions as they make them, and it is news when officials apparently understand what they are doing in the same way as their critics do. But just how newsworthy such a discovery is often turns in substantial part upon what authorities say about it. In this case, the legal authorities Woodward quoted—including Robert Bork—were not shocked by the language in the memos; it has long been thought, among liberals and conservatives alike, that *Roe* was an essentially legislative ruling. The lawyers didn't react with outrage, and neither did anyone of political stature. Finally, and perhaps most important of all, Blackmun told Woodward nothing. His quoted presence in the piece would have made it hot copy. And his absence illustrates one of the limits journalism confronts in covering the Supreme Court—a limit that it doesn't face in covering the elective branches.



I recall being the author of a 1987 internal Justice Department memo on policy strategy that used an infelicitous word, "decapitation," and was leaked to the media in early 1988. The usual technique of journalism in such an instance is to call the author of the memo and ask about his intentions, choice of words, and so on. In my case, this was done and I responded, decapitating "decapitation" as neatly as I could. The usual technique can be employed with officials in the executive and legislative branches, largely because the fact of elections provides an incentive for them to respond. But the technique has no standing, so to speak, in the Supreme Court, the only nonelective branch. The tradition of the justices is not to answer reporters' inquiries about things they've written, whether in opinions or internal memoranda. Blackmun was given the opportunity to comment before Woodward's piece was published; he declined. (He has said nothing since it was published, either.) Had Blackmun commented at all on whether he was legislating in *Roe*, that would have ratcheted up the news value of the piece, perhaps even given it what Woodward told me it lacked—a "smoking-gun quality."

Woodward wound up reporting the "new evidence" not in a news story on A-1 but in an opinion piece on D-1, the front of Outlook, the *Post*'s Sunday opinion section. That placement indicated the relatively low news value the *Post* placed on the piece and diminished the influence it might have had upon other journalism, inasmuch as editors and reporters typically work off the front pages of news sections, not the front pages of Sunday opinion sections.

In the final paragraphs of his article, Woodward took off his reporter's hat and put on that of a commentator. "The 'legislative' issue is important because it goes to the heart of the court's authority and legitimacy," he wrote in a passage that could have been composed by, well, Bob Bork. "The Constitution confers the federal legislative power exclusively to the Congress, so any discussion, even in internal memos, about the justices' 'legislative' purposes takes the court onto perilous ground. The authority of the Supreme Court rests in large part on the public belief that its rulings, no matter how controversial, reflect enduring and permanent constitutional values, that its conclusions are not arbitrary and that the justices, who are appointed for life, work above the political fray."

Woodward obviously could not have written that on A-1, but often the most important things cannot be said on A-1.

• • •

Like congressmen and former government officials, many journalists participate in one of the big growth industries of the eighties—public speaking. They ride the lecture circuit, making tens of thousands of dollars a year (some even hundreds of thousands). Is this a good or bad thing? This is the latest question about the news business that Washington journalists are chewing on, and for the most part the question has been approached in the usual manner. That is, from the perspective of conflict of interest, which is, as I noted last month, one of modern journalism's great preoccupations.

Thus on January 29, *Washington*

Terry Eastland is resident scholar at the National Legal Center for the Public Interest.

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Post ombudsman Richard Harwood wrote: "Should the columnists, commentators and other journalists financially involved with corporations, trade associations and lobbies recuse themselves from commenting on the affairs of their sponsors?" Harwood seems to think they should, and perhaps he's right. The argument is this: a reporter covering the Pentagon who pulls down big fees for speaking to defense industries may be tempted to queer his coverage in favor of the latter, and anyway it just doesn't look good—"appearances," and hence the subjectivity of journalists, counting for so much these days.

But enough of theory. Harwood failed to provide a real instance of a conflict of interest growing out of journalist speechmaking. Neither, so far as I can tell, has anyone else who's done any recent reporting on the matter. In several calls to reporters, I could find none.

Perhaps journalists can't be expected to police themselves (just others) and report their own conflicts of interest, but what's to be done? An Ethics in Journalism Act for the media? Try that on for First Amendment size.

The problem that can be posed by the lucrative lecture circuit is less ethical than practical. Rita Braver of CBS (mistakenly mentioned in Harwood's column as a trade association speaker) told me that she turns down speeches because she wants her time to go to her job and family. For those serious journalists who do spend a lot of time giving speeches, there's the question of whether they still do good reporting or thinking or writing. As with so much else, time on task is key.

• • •

So many Reagan Administration memoirs—how to make sense of them all? Good places to start are David Brock's "What the Kiss-and-Tell Books Tell," in the August 1988 *Commentary*, and Frances FitzGerald's "Memoirs of the Reagan Era" in the January 16 *New Yorker*. Brock's piece is lengthy, FitzGerald's approaches a small book. Brock sits as an appeals court judge, in effect, reviewing the work of the trial court below as constituted by the memoirs of Martin Anderson, Terrel Bell, Michael Deaver, Larry Speakes, Donald Regan, and David Stockman. FitzGerald does the same, throwing in Alexander Haig's book. Brock's interest is in the substance of Ronald Reagan's foreign policy; FitzGerald's, in the man himself. The writers come from different political perspectives, but they do not do what many reviewers of individual memoirs have done—that is, write them off as merely self-serving and trivial. Both Brock and FitzGerald are interested in trying to figure out what the books, taken together, actually say about Reagan and his presidency. And they conclude that the memoirs have a lot to say. Brock finds that they demonstrate Reagan's idealism in foreign affairs, an idealism that has left "a legacy of détente that may turn out to be more dangerous than its precursor of the 1970s." FitzGerald finds that the books portray "a courtlike atmosphere in the White House" and reveal the life of the President as "peculiarly serene."

The memoirs, and comprehensive reviews of the memoirs such as Brock's and FitzGerald's, are must reading for anyone trying to understand the Reagan Administration. That job is going to become more time consuming as yet more memoirs, including the President's very own, roll off the presses this year and next. Doubtless there will be those who churlishly charge Reagan with cashing in on his presidency by writing a memoir while still alive! But Reagan in his own words should yield an indispensable perspective. May there be a Brock or Fitzgerald who reviews his memoir together with all the others written by his aides. □

A Feast of Individualism!

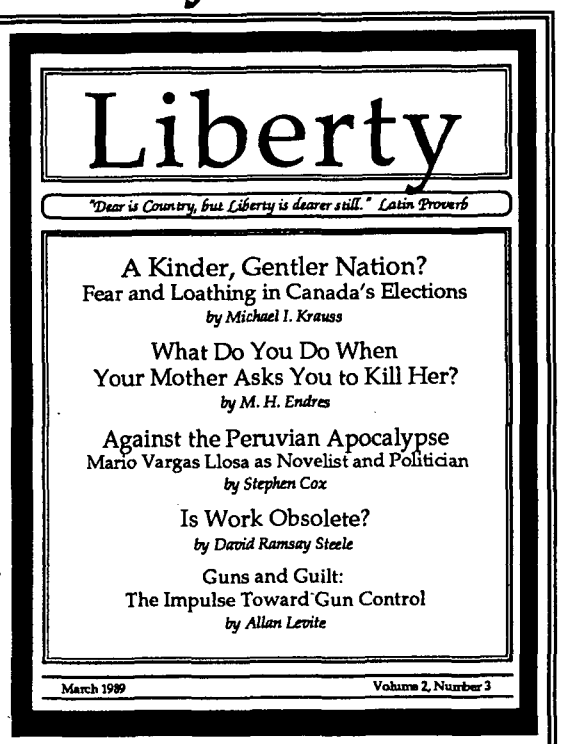
From the current issue of *Liberty*:

A Kinder, Gentler Nation? Michael Krauss analyzes the Canadian election just past. Krauss explains: "Canadians are different from Americans: they are poorer and an awful lot of them seem to want to remain so; they tend to frown on individual creativity and extol communitarian coercion; and a possible majority of them fear foreign influences as much as does the most xenophobic fringe of Americans."

The Abolition of Breathing David Ramsay Steele examines the notion that work is obsolete, as promulgated in a recent offering of the yuppie-leftish *Utne Reader*: "Most workers disappoint the self-nominated elites by their comparatively high preference for more consumer appliances as against more leisure, just as they disappoint the same elites by preferring football to folk dancing. As an Oscar Wilde character enquires, of what use are the lower classes if they don't set us a good example?"

Guilt and Guns: The Impulse Toward Gun Control Allen Levite looks at the motives that lurk behind the gun control campaign: "Intellectuals never blame poor and average people for any problems, since intellectuals regret being neither poor nor average. Nor will they blame criminals (unless they are white-collar criminals), since criminals are also poor."

Against the Peruvian Apocalypse Stephen Cox reports on the latest activities of Mario Vargas Llosa, the intellectual who proposes to return the institutions of private property and individual liberty to Peru: "At stake in Peru's 1990 election is the ideological destiny of the third world—and its material destiny, too, because one can hardly imagine how the desperate economic problems of third-world countries can be solved, unless an indigenous intellectual leadership arises that understands the connection between freedom and prosperity."


Liberty
"Dear is Country, but Liberty is dearer still." Latin Proverb
A Kinder, Gentler Nation?
Fear and Loathing in Canada's Elections
by Michael I. Krauss
What Do You Do When
Your Mother Asks You to Kill Her?
by M. H. Endres
Against the Peruvian Apocalypse
Mario Vargas Llosa as Novelist and Politician
by Stephen Cox
Is Work Obsolete?
by David Ramsay Steele
Guns and Guilt:
The Impulse Toward Gun Control
by Allan Levite
March 1989
Volume 2, Number 3

The Wonderful Wizard of Liberty Ethan Waters reviews the strange career of Robert LeFevre: "In the 1930s, he parlayed his mystical experience into a leadership position with the I AM cult, eventually joining Daddy and Mama Ballard, touring from city to city in their canary-yellow Chryslers, raking in cash from the faithful. Twenty years later, his covey of female followers provided the capital and labor for him to begin his famous Freedom School and his knack for getting contributions from multimillionaire conservative businessmen kept it going."

What if Everything We Know About Safety Is Wrong? John Semmens of the Arizona Department of Transportation argues that nearly every popular belief about traffic safety is wrong: "Everyone 'knows' that bad road conditions are more hazardous than good road conditions. How, then, does one explain the lower fatality rate per mile of travel in the winter versus summer? How does one explain the lower injury rate for accidents on icy versus dry pavement?"

Plus: articles and reviews by M. H. Endres, Murray N. Rothbard, Daniel Karlan, Jeffrey Friedman, Tibor Machan, Jeffrey Tucker, Charles Curley and others.

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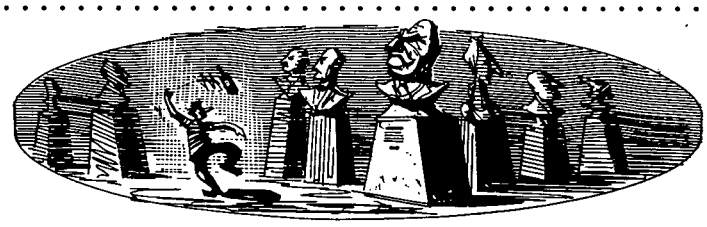

THE COOLIDGEAN PRESS CONFERENCE

by Victor Gold

PRESIDENT (addressing a reporter): *Are you taking down in shorthand what I say?*
REPORTER: *Yes sir.*
PRESIDENT: *Now I don't think that is right. I don't think that is the proper thing to do . . . I don't object to you taking notes as to what I say, but I don't quite (talk) to the conference in anything like finished style . . . anything that would naturally be associated with Presidential utterance.*
—Notes from the Oval Office, July 23, 1925

Calvin Coolidge left the presidency sixty years ago this past March, after watching Herbert Hoover take the oath. Lucky Cal, he knew when to get out of the market. Timing, as the matador said, it's all a matter of timing. Coolidge was President while Wall Street was a raging bull, but equally important, a third of a century before the coaxial cable was laid and the antennaed roof fell in.

Dealing with the press was all so calm and orderly back then. So . . . *proper.* No strobe lights. No Dan Rather to contend with. No ravenous news wolves prowling the corridors, hungry for red meat because they didn't think the White House press secretary's daily briefing was all it should be.

For that matter, no daily White House briefing and no press secretary. You can look it up. A case can be made that Herbert Hoover's troubles began when he became the first President in history to hire a spin doctor. Of course, Coolidge himself paid a terrible price for his self-reliance in dealing with the press. Far and away the most successful American chief executive of the Twentieth Century—his legacy to his successor was peace, prosperity, a budget surplus, and a favorable trade balance—Coolidge has nonetheless come down through the years as an intellectual cretin with no (sigh) *vision* and no (groan) *agenda.*

"Coolidge is dead," someone reported. "How can they tell?" asked Wilson Mizner.

In another version of the story, the question is asked by Dorothy Parker. In still another, by Franklin P. Adams. No matter. Mizner, Parker, Adams, they were all the same to Coolidge. All part of that smart-aleck Manhattan crowd, the Algonquin Hotel set that did for the Roaring Twenties what Johnny Carson and David Letterman do for the Electric Eighties. They furnished the nimble one-liners which, if a President wasn't careful, would define his image not only for his own time but for future generations.

Not that Coolidge's image problem was confined to the urban East. In the heartland there was William Allen White of Emporia, Kansas, whose book, *A Puritan in Babylon*, while it had no effect on Coolidge's popularity as President, would fill out the caricature merely sketched by the New Yorkers—the portrait of Silent Cal, the Great Non-Communicator.

But the truth, beyond the caricature, is that he wasn't Silent Cal at all. Quite the contrary. Ten years ago, through the University of Massachusetts Press, Robert H. Ferrell and Howard H. Quint published a book titled *The Talkative President*, a collection of excerpts from the twice-weekly off-the-record sessions that Coolidge held with the dozen *proper* newsmen assigned to the White House beat. The ground rules for these sessions were, like Coolidge himself, to the point, take it or leave it. Questions had to be submitted in advance to Coolidge's chief (and only) senior aide, C. Bascom Slemp. Answers were to be attributed to a "White House Spokesman." No verbatim quotes allowed. But still, through the thin screen of longhand notes taken by reporters at these sessions, a fresh view of Coolidge emerges, something far different from the Algonquin caricature.

Here then, for those interested in pre-Salvation presidential history—what things were like in the White House, that is, before the Coming of the New Deal and Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.'s historical ministry—a brief but varied sampling of Calvin Coolidge's encounters with the press, courtesy Ferrell & Quint:

• Coolidge on Political Ideology:
THE PRESIDENT: I don't think I can give any definition of the words "reactionary" and "progressive" that would be helpful. That reminds me a little of the old definition of "orthodoxy" and "heterodoxy." I think they used to say that "orthodoxy" was *my* doxy and "heterodoxy" was *your* doxy. . . .

• Coolidge on his Public Image:
THE PRESIDENT: There is considerable speculation as to whether I am likely to change or not. I don't anticipate to change very much. I have tried in the conduct of my office to be natural and I don't want to change that attitude.

• Coolidge on Freedom of the Press:
Q: Has the secretary of war resigned?
THE PRESIDENT: No, the secretary of war has not resigned. I don't expect he is going to resign, and I hope, for the sake of his peace of mind, that his resignation will not be reported in the future oftener than once in two weeks. I don't want to

Victor Gold is The American Spectator's *national correspondent.*

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unduly restrict the reporting, but I think that would be often enough.

• Coolidge on Potomac Punditry:

THE PRESIDENT: A news story in the *Washington Star* this afternoon hints at some drastic and mysterious action which the President proposes to take within the next few months. Would it be consistent to ask if the Chief Executive has in contemplation any radical departure from his present policies? I don't think any radical departures now occur to me. While I don't want to disagree with as good an authority as the *Washington Star* . . . I think you would be warranted in prophesying, if any of you want to prophesy, that I have at present no expectation of any drastic and mysterious action. I think it rather foreign to me to have drastic and mysterious action. I suppose that is why this is news. It is something different . . . from what you gentlemen have led the public to expect of me.

• Coolidge on Accommodating the Press:

Q: Do you have any plans for a summer vacation?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I haven't made any plans yet for a summer vacation. As I have indicated before, I will do the best I can to arrange one for you.

• Coolidge on Not Accommodating the Press:

THE PRESIDENT: I don't want to cut off newspaper discussion about anything, but it isn't helpful for me to keep talking about certain foreign relations unless there is some development that warrants some statement on my part. I [don't] want to keep rehashing . . . the same thing, because it irritates foreign countries . . . and they wonder why the White House keeps making statements that don't appear to them very helpful.

• Coolidge on the Presidential High-life:

Q: Mr. President, do you mean [to have] a charity ball or something of that kind outside the White House?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you can't have a ball in the White House. You couldn't get anybody in there, not even the newspapermen. Those who [had to select] the people that should be invited to a ball in the East Room would have some trouble.

Q: Would you attend the ball, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: You mean if they have one? I don't think so.

• Coolidge on Presidential Outreach:

Q: Any speeches planned, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: I haven't any plans for speaking away from Washington after the first of March. I am going out speaking just as little as possible and keep the public peace.

• Coolidge on the Federal Surplus:

THE PRESIDENT: No evidence has come to me that the next Treasury surplus will be in excess of the $252,540,000 that has already been made public.

(Note: Coolidge was wrong. The actual surplus came to $398,000,000.)

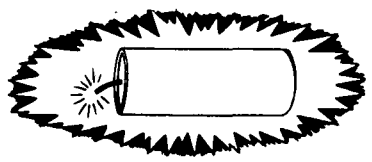
• Coolidge on the Great Deficit to Come:

THE PRESIDENT: Of course, a good many proposals are made by people that have very excellent things they would like to have Government do, but they [also] have no responsibility for providing ways and means by which their proposals can be carried out. I don't think in all my experience . . . with prosposals for spending money, that I have ever had any proposal from anyone as to what could be done to raise money, and very few [as to] what can be done to save money.

• Coolidge on his Place in History (in response to a question asked at his last press conference in the White House, March 1, 1929):

THE PRESIDENT: Perhaps one of the most important accomplishments of my administration has been minding my own business. □

Help us explode myths about Catholics!



Harvard historian Arthur M. Schlesinger Sr. once said that prejudice against the Roman Catholic Church is "the deepest bias in the history of the American people."

There is a tenacious myth among Americans generally that says Catholics are stupid, lazy, and superstitious.

Among fundamentalists there is that whopper of a myth that the Pope is the Anti-Christ and the Catholic Church is the Whore of Babylon, a hideous and many-tentacled pagan cult.

Among evangelicals there is a more sedate myth that Catholicism is a numbing religion riddled with dead formulas, empty rituals, and rigid prohibitions — a legalistic religion which fears the Bible and freezes out the grace of Christ.

Among secular humanists there is a politically handy myth that only Catholics regard abortion as murder, and that no one in his right mind who is not a Catholic would object to legalized abortion.

Secular humanists also purvey the myth that Catholics call abortion murder because they are puritanical and hate sex. Moreover, it is said, Catholics opposed to abortion don't really care about the sanctity of human life, as they claim to, because they are utterly indifferent to the threat to innocent life posed by nuclear weapons.

Then, there is the abiding myth that Catholics can't really explain why they are Catholic, that when Catholics are challenged their convictions crumble, and hence Catholics fear democracy, the open circulation of ideas, and freedom of religion.

Oddly, myths about Catholicism have even worked their way into the Catholic Church herself. Hence, among modernist Catholics there is a corrosive myth that Catholics who believe in the creeds and the Church's magisterium are both narrow-minded ignoramuses who self-righteously cling to the letter of the law and mean-spirited bigots who fear Protestants and fail in charity toward their neighbors.

This is an intimidating syllabus of myths — but happily, each myth is inaccurate and erroneous, and each one is disproved by the existence and insistence of the NEW OXFORD REVIEW. Actually, we at the NEW OXFORD REVIEW don't waste much time fretting about the myth-makers; rather, we are content to be living witnesses to the truth about Catholicism and the falsehood of all the myths.

The established media have duly noted us: *Time* finds us "conservative" (true enough, when it comes to doctrine, morality, and ecclesial authority), *Newsweek* says we're "cheeky" (probably more true than we realize), and *The New York Times* thinks our editorial policy is "curious" (probably very true, at least from the *Times*'s perspective).

The point is: if you want a Roman Catholic magazine that confounds the conventional stereotypes, then the NEW OXFORD REVIEW is for you. Consider the words of Francis X. Maier, Editor of the weekly *National Catholic Register*: "The NEW OXFORD REVIEW is simply the best publication of its kind in the United States — always provocative, always interesting, always solidly Catholic." If that's what you've been looking for in a Catholic monthly magazine, then help us explode myths and prejudices, and subscribe today!

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THIRD WORLD DEADBEATS

by Irwin M. Stelzer

No one was—or should have been—surprised when George Bush decided to throw about $50 billion of taxpayers' money into the hopper to help bail out improvident savings and loan associations. After all, many of the sick banks are in his adopted home state of Texas, from which also hail his secretary of state, the Speaker of the House, and the chairman of the Senate Finance Committee. One need not agree with Bush's move to understand it as a response to a noisy and powerful constituency.

But no such easy explanation exists for the administration's apparent flirtation with some form of a debt forgiveness program for so-called Third World countries. Bush has said he opposes "forgiveness" but favors taking "a whole new look at the situation," and has assigned that review to the Brady bunch at the Treasury. That review, which may be completed by the time this issue appears, will not end the argument. Those favoring overt or covert government-assisted debt relief can be expected to carry on their fight. For they feel their cause is just. And why not?

After all, that paragon of economic managers, Mikhail Gorbachev, has urged America to be lenient with its debtors, this in a much-reported speech to the U.N. assemblage of countries that would, if given the chance, appropriate and then squander America's wealth.

The Japanese, too, have asked us to be gentler and kinder to the debtor countries, unembarrassed by the fact that they have carefully tied their own lending to requirements that the recipients spend the money on Japanese goods; have expressed no desire to repay the United States, in money or gratitude, for the resources devoted to Japan's postwar reconstruction; and have not suggested tearing up the billions of dollars of American IOUs that they have accumulated by shipping their goods to us, while keeping their markets closed to all save a trickle of American products.

Add to these pleaders America's banks. They hold some $76 billion in notes from the fifteen leading debtors. Some of these IOUs are worthless or nearly so: Peru's bring about five cents on the dollar. Others are estimated to be worth more—market makers will buy Chile's notes at 60 cents on the dollar. Little wonder that the Institute of International Finance, representing 186 banks in forty countries, has called for creditor governments (read taxpayers) to guarantee bank loans to debtor countries.

It is interesting to examine the reasons Bush is being given to support a rethinking of the so-called Baker Plan, which has been the basis for American policy toward debtor nations in the past several years. Under that plan, banks and international financial institutions would be encouraged to make new credits available to debtor nations if, and only if, those nations adopted a series of economic reforms. These were to include a reduction of the state's ownership role in the economy (i.e., Thatcherist privatization); greater reliance on market forces to set prices, wages, and exchange rates; and trade liberalization.

These conditions sprang not merely from a Reaganesque ideological belief in market mechanisms. Or from some misplaced desire to spread "the American way of life." Rather, they were based on the idea that such reforms would stop the flight of capital from these countries, and would stimulate economic growth sufficiently to make debt repayment possible without a serious fall in the debtor nations' standards of living.

Unfortunately, it has been difficult to persuade most Latin American countries to adopt this free enterprise program. Corruption remains a way of life; state enterprises are still regarded as job and patronage providers, rather than as business units aimed at producing high quality goods at competitive prices; exchange rates are set at levels bearing no relation to those in the free black markets. And living standards have dropped—by some 15 percent in the 1980s, according to the Rev. J. Bryan Hehir of the United States Catholic Conference.

This economic malaise, which hits the poor harder than the rich, is blamed on American banks' insistence that the interest and, at times, a bit of the principal on their loans be repaid. Venezuela's new (and former) president, Carlos Andreas Pérez, has taken a leading role in explaining to Bush and, at his lavish inaugural, to the likes of Dan Quayle, Fidel Castro, and Daniel Ortega, that the debtors simply cannot meet their obligations. Indeed, if required to do so, they will have a choice of defaulting (they've done that before) or of so cutting into their citizens' living standards as to provoke left-wing revolutions (Mexico) or right-wing coups (Argentina).

Why America should interfere with the sovereign right of these countries to select dictators from one or the other end of the political spectrum is nowhere explained. Certainly if a regime is no threat to America (as is Nicaragua with its desire for airstrips to accommodate offensive aircraft, or as was Grenada, for a similar reason), and especially if it has a popular mandate, it is not our job to prevent it from coming to power. So a Latin American nation's threat to cut off its democratic nose to spite our bankers' faces should be given little weight in Bush's current policy reappraisal.

Equally short shrift should be given to the notion that most of these debtor nations are in some sense intrinsically "poor." Brazil has huge, rich reserves of iron ore, manganese, gems, and gold; Colombia can count among its resources not only cocaine but also emeralds, coal, and iron ore; Argentina is rich in agricultural resources. Venezuela has billions if not trillions of barrels of oil in the ground, but chooses to restrict its production by remaining a member of the OPEC cartel—and, under Pérez, an increasingly loyal member. So, too, Mexico, which sits on huge reserves of oil, and cooperates with OPEC by restricting output. Lest we forget: OPEC restricts the production of crude oil in order to keep prices high, thereby imposing an enormous tax on American consumers.

These nations' debt problems do not result from nature's niggardliness, any more than do our own. Rather, they result from poor economic organization—bloated welfare states, dominated by inefficient state-owned enterprises and corrupt bureaucracies. The stifling effect such economic mismanagement has on Latin living standards is brilliantly laid out by Peruvian economist-entrepreneur Hernando de Soto in his recently published *The Other Path: The Invisible Revolution in the Third World* (Harper & Row). In collaboration with the Institute for Liberty and Democracy, de Soto gathered data on what in Peru is called "the informal economy"—activities of entrepreneurs, often operating illegally in areas reserved by law to the state. His findings are astonishing. Half the population of Lima lives in houses built by black marketeers, illegal contractors who have, since 1960, built forty-seven times as much low-income

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housing as has the state. Why did these builders operate illegally? Because obtaining state sanction is almost impossible. The institute experienced these difficulties when it tried to set up a fictitious clothing factory, paying only two of the ten bribes solicited by government bureaucrats. The registration process took nearly ten months and a skilled group of applicants, and cost the equivalent of thirty-two months of wages (at the minimum wage rate). In short, a barrier too steep for a fledgling entrepreneur to surmount.

Unless situations such as de Soto describes are changed, it would be foolish for us to fling good money after bad by forgiving past debts: the new loans will end up in bureaucratic pockets or in Miami and Swiss bank vaults. Altruism would be misplaced.

So, too, would fear. Latin threats are quite empty. "If we don't grow because of the debt burden, we don't pay," warns Mexico's young president, the Harvard-trained Carlos Salinas de Gortari. But Brazil tried reneging and, as Salinas well knows, found that it couldn't function as a pariah in world markets. So it resumed payments.

Besides, the day when a strike by a debtors' cartel could mortally wound the American banking system is long past. In 1982, when Mexico triggered the so-called crisis by announcing that it could not (would not?) meet its obligations, American bank exposure to the fifteen countries associated with the Baker Plan totalled $90 billion, a sum equal to 136 percent of the banks' capital. That exposure has since been reduced to $76 billion, while bank capital has doubled, so that loans to the Baker-fifteen now come to only 58 percent of bank capital. "The potential effect on the U.S. banking system of the debt problems of developing countries has been managed with some degree of success," Manuel Johnson, vice chairman of the Federal Reserve System's Board of Governors, understated to a House committee.

That success has been due to the fact that market forces pressured the banks into increasing their capital bases, and into developing markets in which debt instruments could be sold, or swapped for equity. It also forced the borrowers to become more competitive in world markets: their exports have risen so that interest payments have fallen from one-third of exports to one-quarter.

Mexico may yet provide an example of this emerging turnaround. Consumer price increases there are holding to what, by Latin American standards, are moderate levels (about 2 percent a month). This despite an easing of price controls. Add to this the regime's apparent determination to reduce rampant corruption—the powerful head of the oil workers' union was spectacularly arrested by police who knocked on the door of his estate with a bazooka—and there is reason for optimism. That may be why rich Mexicans are bringing their capital home: some $700 million returned to Mexico in the first month of this year alone. This was a lot more useful than the new $3.5 billion loan we offered—and which Mexico refused.

Mexico's experience perhaps proves that internal reform can work, making debt forgiveness—overt or covert—unnecessary. Let's hope Bush and Brady realize that, and ignore populist Latins' pleas for debt relief and more loans, and liberal Democrats' urgings that debt relief, rather than fundamental reform, is a cure for "Third World" problems.

If Venezuela does press us, perhaps we can suggest that they first withdraw from OPEC and stop gouging American consumers. Or privatize the oil industry, nationalized by Pérez in his last incarnation as president. And, if the Japanese press us to be kinder to our debtors, we can always offer a deal: we forgive one dollar of Third World debt for every dollar of American IOUs that the Japanese tear up. □

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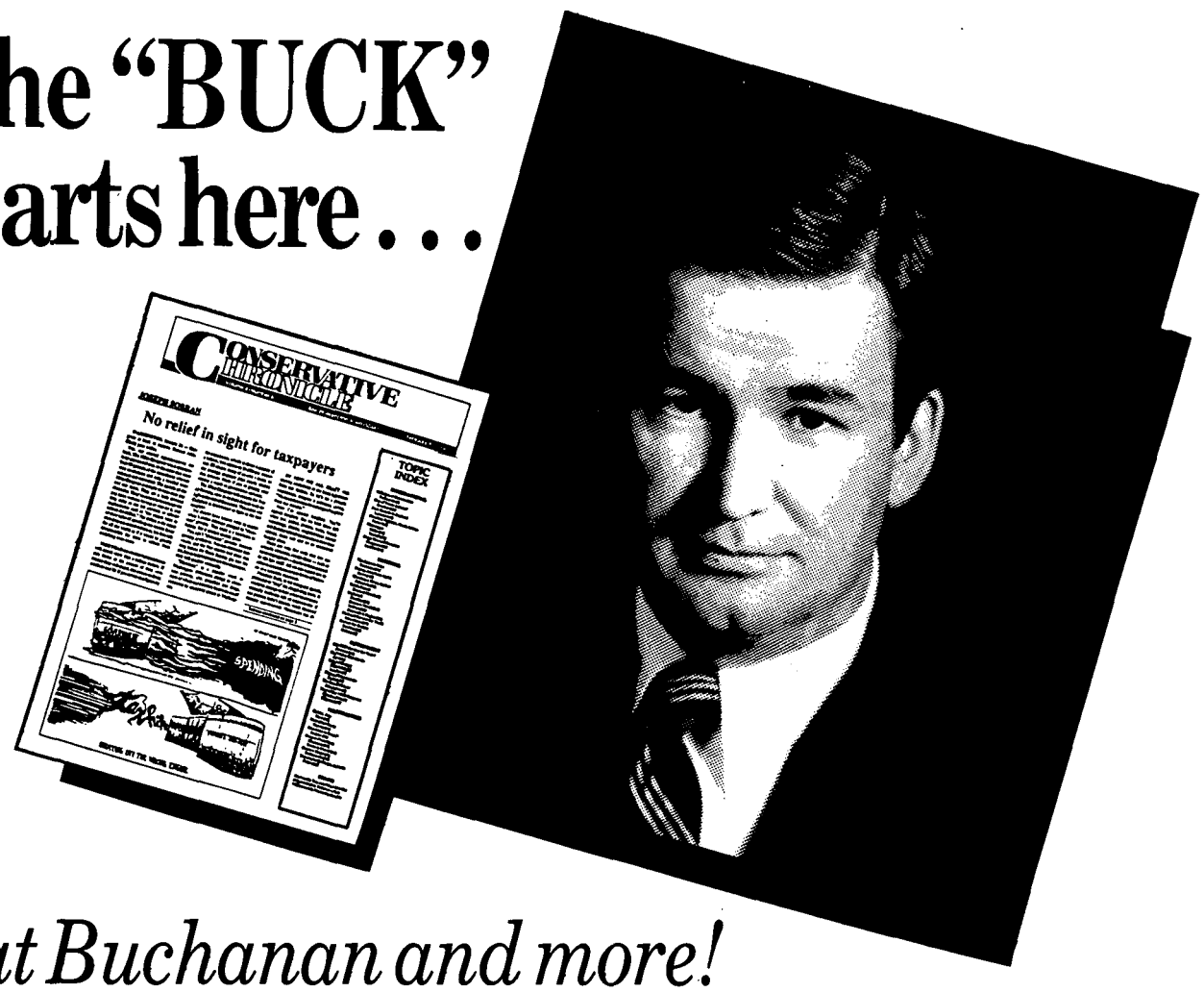

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THOUGHTS ON HOMELESSNESS TODAY

by Ernest van den Haag

According to a poll recently published in the *New York Times*, more than 70 percent of the American people think that the homeless are a serious problem about which something should be done. They are right. But what? The number of homeless fluctuates with various factors and many shun all contact with enumerators. No estimate of their number is more than a guess. (Currently, the most reliable, or least unreliable, is about 500,000.) We can classify the homeless into three groups.

(1) Many alcoholics and drug addicts are homeless, because their addictions cause them to spend what money they get hold of on alcohol and drugs. These are, as it were, the traditional homeless, who used to be labeled derelicts, vagrants, or bums. Skid row (more accurately the police[1]) no longer confines them, wherefore they have become quite visible. They constitute perhaps 30 percent of the homeless population. They have been around for a long time and have defeated many attempts at rehabilitation.

(2) Homeless persons often are mentally or psychologically ill. Many have been released from institutions that previously sheltered them. These homeless persons, estimated to be about 40 percent of the total, are comparatively new on the scene. According to current criteria they are not dangerous enough to themselves, or to others, to warrant involuntary institutionalization. Yet they are unable to provide shelter for themselves and often refuse public shelters as well, preferring railroad or bus stations, parks, or doorways.

(3) An increasing number of persons, neither addicted nor mentally ill, are homeless because of circumstances beyond their control. They lost their homes because of family rifts, housing destruction (for construction of new housing), abandonment of old buildings by landlords, unemployment, or illness. Somehow they fell through the cracks in the welfare system and are left without enough income to rent an apartment at current rates. They constitute perhaps 30 percent of the total. This group, too, is new on the scene.

Consider the addicts first. Alcoholism or drug addiction, once acquired, becomes a tenacious, sometimes pathogenic, habit. Much chatter to the contrary notwithstanding, however, these habits themselves are not diseases. The effects—e.g., cirrhosis of the liver—are. Since they are not diseases there is no medical treatment and no medical cure for the habits themselves. One can try, however, to motivate the affected persons to get rid of their addiction. Psychological support can be useful in this respect, and should be provided. Alcoholics Anonymous can be quite helpful to those who want to get rid of alcoholism. So can "clinics" (usually at a high price). But these are not medical treatments, any more than genetic predispositions (whether to obesity or to alcoholism) are diseases. Actual diseases, such as cancer or the common cold, are not volitional: they do not start, continue, or stop depending on the patient's actions and they can be cured regardless of the patient's volition. Addiction, however, depends altogether on the addict's volition. Some addicts, in time, get rid of their addiction, with or without help. Further, methadone can advantageously replace heroin—if the addict so desires; but it is not effective with cocaine or alcohol. It seems unlikely that more than a few alcoholics or drug addicts can be removed from the street.

As for the mentally impaired, social workers and mental health clinics might help some of them. But many do not take medications outside an institutional setting, or visit clinics, or allow social workers to help. Still, more might be lured into a semi-institutional setting, somewhere between leaving them altogether to their own devices and totally restricting them. Too few such settings are available.

Finally, consider those homeless who function reasonably well, but cannot find dwellings they can afford. Here is a new phenomenon that defies easy explanation.

The country is prosperous; unemployment is low. Welfare schemes take care of most of the old and disabled. Yet there are many homeless persons. Surely Americans were poorer in 1940, or 1910, and less often insured than they are now. Yet the poor rarely were homeless. Isn't it odd that a country that produces food and clothing and all other consumer goods efficiently and cheaply is unable to produce housing cheap enough for the poor to afford? What is going on?

Consider New York. The number of inhabitants has not risen in the last ten years. Yet there is a housing shortage, and rents are sky high in new buildings. In older buildings, rents are usually kept down by rent control and stabilization laws. These laws cap the rental income of landlords, while imposing costly maintenance and service standards. (They also make it hard to evict those tenants who, complaining about maintenance or services, refuse to pay their rent.) The result is that landlords of older buildings often find that the cost of maintenance and taxes exceeds the income they yield. Hence they abandon these buildings. Every year, during the last ten years, more dwelling space is being lost in New York than is being added by residential construction.

In the past the poor, just as they would drive used cars, would rent apartments left by the rich who moved to more luxurious ones or to the suburbs. No longer. Maintenance standards imposed by law, combined with rent ceilings, all too often make it unrewarding for landlords to rent apartments in old buildings.[2] Abandonment contributes to the scarcity of dwelling space and, consequently, to the high rents in newer, uncontrolled buildings. Rent control does protect tenants in possession, but enables new buildings to charge rents so high that the poor cannot afford them.

New construction now is confined to luxury buildings with luxury rents, because the cost has been driven up by exorbitant wages exacted by construction unions protected by local governments. They also make it nearly impossible to employ nonunion labor. There would be nothing wrong with high wages for construction workers, if the wages of future tenants had kept up. They have not and cannot. (There is such a thing as competition outside the construction industry.) Hence the poor cannot afford the rents driven up by building unions. Further, many construction jobs, such as plumbing or electrical installation, require licenses, which are hard to get and allow the few possessors to charge monopoly prices. Building regulations often specify materials more expensive to install than some alternatives. This, too, at the behest of unions. Regulations have grown so numerous and the licenses, permits, and inspections required so many, that contractors must spend considerable sums to conform (or to get around them). Legal and union obstructions also hinder the use of prefabricated parts, let alone altogether prefabricated houses.

Homelessness has become a problem even for unimpaired persons because housing has become extraordinarily scarce and expensive. Rent control leads to the abandonment of old buildings. Private construction of nonluxury buildings has stopped, because unions, together with local governments, have raised the cost of construction so that apartments cannot be rented for prices the poor can afford. Thus, the poor, if they are not lucky enough to possess a rent-controlled apartment, cannot find one they can afford.

[1]The "vagrancy," "public drunkenness," or "disorderly conduct" laws used by the police in the past to confine the homeless have been declared unconstitutional, or are not enforced.

[2]If he can sufficiently upgrade it, a landlord may coopt the building, selling apartments at market prices, whenever those tenants who did not buy die or leave. This may preserve the building, but does not create additional dwelling space.

Ernest van den Haag is the John M. Olin Professor of Jurisprudence and Public Policy at Fordham University.

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To be sure, psychological problems, mental disease, and addiction would contribute to homelessness even if cheap apartments were readily available. Still, the contribution of the homeless themselves to their homelessness should not be overestimated. Some indeed are homeless for entirely endogenous reasons. But others, even though addicted or mentally handicapped, might not be homeless if cheap apartments were available. Addicts and those with psychological problems have rational intervals. Many would find shelter—if it were available.

Having created the problem, local governments clamor for federal funds for more public housing. Yet public housing has many drawbacks that are too well known to bear rehearing. At any rate, it seems most unlikely that the federal government can appropriate enough money to make a difference. In the past, public housing has never come near making up for the private housing that local governments have discouraged.

If affordable private housing could be built again, if local governments were to change their cost-raising policies, some persons still might require a subsidy: their income may be too low to pay the rents that would have to be charged even after the scarcity created by local governments is overcome. Such persons should receive a rent subsidy in the form of vouchers, sufficient to rent apartments at market prices. Apartments will be built privately, just as shirts or cornflakes are produced privately, if the government allows them to be produced at reasonable costs. □

THE GREAT AMERICAN SALOON SERIES

PAPAGAYO

by Dave Shiflett

Inhospitable planet! Winter blasts up the pantlegs. Falling icicles through the feet. Split lips and lungs full of furnace fumes. The question is: Why bother?

Well, for one thing, come summer we can return to North Carolina's Outer Banks (a remote stretch of sand directly opposite the globe from Kalgoolrie, Australia). More specifically, near mile-post 7 stands the Croatan Inn, and on the second storey (go through the front door and up the stairs to the left) is the deck of Papagayo. I usually drop by in the late afternoon and sit in the northeast corner in the shade of an overhanging roof.

The wife sits across our small round table in the full glare of the sun: in repose she favors Cleopatra, or so it seems to me. Lucky man! If the sunlight traveled its 93 million miles to find only her, it was worth the trip. I tell her so. Plus this: "I'm broke." The dear woman orders a frozen rum drink for herself and a beer for me. The view is sublime: she, the sand dunes, the great Atlantic beyond. And with a slight shift of the chair, there's even more to see.

At a table in the center of the deck a family feeds and drinks. Father sips beer while momma laps up a margarita. His gut rests atop his thighs, and momma's rump, a magnificent thing, provides an ample cushion in her adirondack chair. The children have soft drinks with plenty of cherries; occasionally momma gives the 13-year-old a sip of tequila that sends the girl's eyes spinning. Free chips and salsa are heartily devoured.

The rest of the clientele, scattered at twelve or fifteen other tables, includes many young women. How they stare. To an inquisitive, hungry blond in the corner is dispatched a note: "In everlasting homage." That done, I shift my chair close to the wife's, gently take her hand, and gaze back out upon the ocean. Drinks are silently left on our table, with thick napkins to catch the large amount of bottle sweat.

My wife once took a splinter from her chair, but the distractions at Papagayo are usually much more pleasant. Infinity, an abstract idea in the study, stretches out before you: giant clouds, giant ocean, endless sky. The sea is full of shipwrecks. Blackbeard the pirate lived nearby, and was himself quite a drinker, handling rum "as could no other man of his day," according to his biographer, Robert E. Lee of Winston-Salem. When his headless body was dumped into Ocracoke Inlet on November 22, 1718, it reportedly swam around the ship several times. His skull, the legend continues, was crafted into the base of a punchbowl used for many years at Raleigh Tavern in Williamsburg. The rest of him was hung at the entrance to Hampton Roads as a warning to pirates.

Most of the time, at least in the early evening, the deck is quiet and conducive to wandering thoughts like these. During one visit, however, a guitarist-singer performed for a crowd of thirty or so guests. His act was mediocre, and when he asked for requests another note was forwarded: "Tune your instrument," it read. Generally, records or tapes provide the music.

More pleasing are the volleyball games in the sandy yard between the deck and the dunes. Though strictly amateur, they provide memorable moments. Last August, for example, a young woman in a bikini leaped into the sky: the sun reflected off her glistening flesh while the salt breeze filled with the aroma of her coconut oil and aloe. When she touched down in the sand, the gentle vibration went deep into the brain of an observer. Such memories cause geezers to rise from their deathbeds and shout, "Nice shot, sweetheart!"

So goes the afternoon. Because it is easy to spend so many hours drinking in such pleasant surroundings, visitors should remember that the Banks have a presumptive drunk level of .1 on the alco-sensor. Accommodations at the local jail are said to rate two stars: firm bunks but the scrambled eggs tend to be runny. On top of that, local hotels are not known to reimburse customers for time spent in the drunk tank. Moderate drinking is therefore encouraged.

And so the bill: two daiquiris, one Heineken, two Superiors: $14.70. Then downstairs for dinner, where Mexican-style seafood is served in air-conditioned comfort. In early evening the line, if there is one, is short. The bill is also diminutive, with a huge seafood dinner for two, including wine and another Superior, going for $31, gratuity included. As you rise to leave, you also notice that past, present, and future have been defanged. There's not a worry in your head.

The road back to the cottage is a straight one, and unless there's a stop at a fishing pier you and your loved one are in bed by nine: the wind blows through the window, the children are in their bunks, and it seems especially sad that life must one day end. It is for nights like these that we suffer winter. All in all, it's not a bad deal. □

Dave Shiflett is a writer living in Virginia.

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THE TALKIES

FAIRLY FUNNY

by Bruce Bawer

Working Girl is the archetypal eighties comedy. It's cast entirely with bankable names (Melanie Griffith, Harrison Ford, Sigourney Weaver); it's so glossily produced that you sometimes feel as if it would be much, much funnier if only it didn't look so *expensive*; it has a distracting Top-40-type score (by Carly Simon) that doesn't really suit the picture at all; it has a glamorous setting, and a get-to-the-top-of-the-heap plot, and a love interest, and a gratuitous sex scene or two; it's funny enough, and even sort of touching at times, though there's not a thing about it that you haven't seen a hundred times before. And while you'll probably leave the theater feeling entertained, you'll know that there's not much about the picture that will stick in your mind a week later.

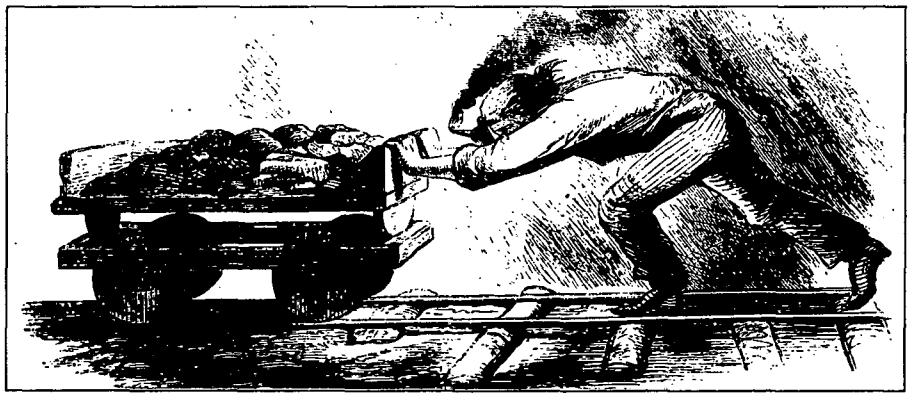
Here's the story: Griffith plays Tess McGill, a tacky-dressing, gum-chewing, English-language-fracturing 30-year-old white-trash secretary who resides in working-class Staten Island and works at a brokerage firm on Wall Street. Like all the other white-trash secretaries who ride the ferry to work every morning, she lives in a dumpy apartment and has a going-nowhere, good-for-nothing, macho-dumbbell boyfriend (Alec Baldwin). But there's one thing that separates her from the other white-trash secretaries: she's brainy. Over the past few years, she's earned her MBA in night school, and she's determined to move up in the firm. Things look hopeless, however. She's up against a host of Ivy Leaguers —most of them men—who speak correctly, dress properly, and have the Right Look. To them, Tess is nothing more than a sex object. It doesn't help that she's utterly without tact; when one of her superiors does her wrong, she abuses him—before the entire company —on the electronic tickertape. We're supposed to like her for this: she's not stuffy like these other Wall Street types, she's *spunky!*

Not surprisingly, her spunkiness gets her fired. At her new job she finds herself with, thank heaven, a woman boss—the beautiful and sophisticated Katharine (Sigourney Weaver), who proves to be a year younger than she is. And who proves also to be a great deal less of a blessing than Tess had thought, because when Tess comes up with an investment idea for a client, Katharine doesn't hesitate to rip it off. It's when Katharine fractures her leg on the slopes, and is hospitalized in ski country for a week or so, that Tess does something—well, spunky: she covertly steals her investment idea back and, pretending to be something more than a secretary, joins forces with Jack Trainer (Harrison Ford), a first-class, fast-lane deal-maker at another brokerage firm. In partnership with him, she proceeds, within a matter of days, to negotiate a multimillion-dollar acquisitions deal for a major corporation. Needless to say, in true-to-formula fashion, Tess and this hunky wheeler-dealer fall quickly in love—for he's not like all the other big-time Wall Street operators, you see: he *hates* networking, hates talking about money, hates the whole downtown crowd. (Sure—and Sammy Davis, Jr. hates show business.)

At any rate, in order to pull off this breathtaking coup behind Katharine's back, Tess must effect a major transformation in herself—and who else to use as a model but Katharine herself? It's weird: this young lady whose lower-middle-class look and voice and carriage have kept her from joining the ranks of the Masters of the Universe manages somehow to turn herself overnight into a replica of the cool, elegant Katharine. What gives? Why is this transformation suddenly so easy for her to carry off, and why in heaven's name hasn't it occurred to her—or hasn't she been able—to do it before? And while we're busy asking questions, what species of morality is operating here? We're expected to feel that Tess is justified in her subterfuge because Katharine has betrayed her. But Tess isn't simply getting back at Katharine—she's putting at risk the reputation of the company that employs her, not to mention the entire career of her unwitting and innocent partner in the deal, with whom she is supposedly smitten.

What's more, the film's class values seem rather confused, to say the least. Consider this: in the tried-and-true tradition of Hollywood moviemaking, Tess and her lower-middle-class girlfriends are (without apparent exception) good and decent folks; the upper-middle-class types in the executive suites are almost entirely rotten. The only problem with Tess's life (aside from the fact that her boyfriend is a creep) is that her home, wardrobe, and neighborhood are pretty tacky—but that's not even a problem, really, because she doesn't *know* they're tacky. By her own standards, then, Tess's life doesn't seem to be missing anything important. Yet she wants nothing more than to escape from the world she knows and to move up into the world of these Ivy League snobs whom she despises—and we're supposed to cheer for her. Why?

These logical inconsistencies aside, *Working Girl*—written by Kevin Wade and directed by Mike Nichols—is admittedly a very slick contrivance, in the best and worst senses of the phrase, its plot as neatly worked out as it is improbable. As is usual in a film of this sort, the fat cats are rather too broadly played, but Nichols does capture nicely the atmosphere of those gray, Pennsylvania-steel-town-like working-class communities that line the northern tier of Staten Island. And he captures the residents of these communities too: one of the film's most memorable images is the sight of Joan Cusack—in the role of Tess's best friend —wearing matching orange-and-blue earrings and eyeshadow. But the question remains: Are we supposed to laugh condescendingly at these people or identify with them? Nichols and Wade apparently want to have it both ways.



The leading cast is a mixed bag. Griffith possesses the sort of annoying, monotonous voice that a couple of generations ago would have kept an actress from becoming a movie star (and with good reason). Nonetheless she is appropriately endearing, for the most part (although she fails to make Tess's penchant for the occasional vulgar insult seem anything but ugly), and carries out with aplomb her character's metamorphosis into a graceful swan. Ford, meanwhile, in the role of the driven-yet-decent mover-and-shaker who is also Tess's love interest (and who, incidentally, embodies a contradiction or two of his own), exudes the requisite middle-aged-boyish charm and energy. Yet it is Weaver who lingers longest in the mind. Her character, Katharine, may be a devil, but she's got a lot more style and poise than most heroines in American movies nowadays, and Weaver plays her with great verve. This is a role that the young Katharine Hepburn would've sunk her teeth into, and Weaver does it proud.

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Who's Harry Crumb? Long answer: he's a bumbling oaf of a private investigator, "the last in a long line of great detectives," who has been

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exiled by the successful, upscale family agency, Crumb and Crumb, to an extremely seedy branch office in Tulsa, Oklahoma. At the beginning of the movie, Harry gets the call that he's obviously been awaiting years, summoning him to the agency's L.A. headquarters to investigate a crime—a kidnapping, to be specific. And investigate he does, with remarkable fatuity and incompetence.

Short answer: Harry is Inspector Clouseau, of the Pink Panther films, without a script, a director, or an accent. Or, of course, without the late Peter Sellers to give him that certain *je ne sais quoi*—although it must be said that John Candy, the heavyweight star of this featherweight comedy, has his own special something. That something, unfortunately, does not include a talent for choosing scripts. Not that there's anything wrong, necessarily, with a film that sets out to amuse 12-year-olds; but when you get the feeling that the script was *written* by a couple of 12-year-olds, you've got trouble.

Granted, there's a lot of funny stuff in this picture, virtually all of it slapstick. For instance: Candy, at the wheel of a speeding car whose brakes have been cut, pulls out a book entitled *Emergency Driving Made Easy*. Candy, to dramatize a point, slams his hands palms downward on a desk, thereby impaling himself on a dozen or so fishhooks. Candy, at the racetrack in a jockey outfit, gets stuck in a tiny phone booth labled "Jockeys Only." Candy, spying on a kidnapping suspect from inside an apartment building ventilating system, ends up being propelled through the labyrinthine ducts at breakneck speed when the suspect sets the air-conditioning on exhaust. It's not the most sophisticated kind of humor, but it does make you laugh.

Through all these episodes, Candy mugs it up more than adequately, and for those in search of an utterly uncerebral entertainment, the half-dozen or so sequences of this sort are probably worth the price of admission (as prices of admission go these days). Other viewers, however, may well leave the theater feeling undernourished. For even in Candy's funniest moments, the wit of Blake Edwards's Pink Panther movies is sorely lacking. This patron, for one, left *Harry Crumb* with a newfound appreciation of Edwards's ability to build a sight gag, his sense of timing, and his avoidance of overkill. Neither *Harry Crumb*'s director, Paul Flaherty, nor its screenwriters, Robert Conte and Peter Martin Wortmann, seem to know when enough is enough.

Nor do they have a very clear bead on their principal character. They apparently think it is sufficient, for their comedic purposes, to have Harry say and do one blatantly stupid thing after another. But even within the framework of sheer farce there are rules about credibility and consistency of character. The makers of the Pink Panther films recognized this; the makers of *Harry Crumb* don't. Part of what's funny about Clouseau is that even in his most ridiculous moments he doesn't know he's ridiculous. He has a self-possession, a sense of dignity, that makes his bumbling all the more hilarious. Sometimes Candy and company appear to be going for this quality with *Harry Crumb*, and sometimes they don't. The film's uncertainty of tone is disastrous: indeed, a couple of scenes involving a listless, cross-eyed, heavy-lidded butler are so unfunny, and feel so out-of-place, that they have a positively surreal effect. (But then, the whole supporting cast gives the impression that it's killing time waiting for a better movie to come along.) Finally, the screenwriters' gift for amusing dialogue is virtually nil: this is, alas, yet another of those eighties comedies in which the typical snappy comeback is "Says you." If *Harry Crumb* nonetheless provides quite a few laughs, it is thanks mostly to Candy's native drollery, winsomeness, and vivacity. □

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BOOK REVIEWS

ESCALANTE: THE BEST TEACHER IN AMERICA

Jay Mathews/Henry Holt and Company/320 pp. $19.95

Peter Skerry

Jaime Escalante first received national attention late in 1982 as the barrio math teacher whose twelve students bested the Educational Testing Service by retaking and passing the Advanced Placement (AP) calculus exam on which they had been accused of cheating. Since that episode Escalante's efforts have placed East Los Angeles's Garfield High, with a 95 percent Hispanic student body, fourth among all public high schools nationally in the number of students taking AP calculus exams. The only private school sending more students to the exams is Andover. In 1987, Escalante's school produced more than 26 percent of all Mexican-Americans in the country who received a passing grade in AP calculus.

As Jay Mathews, Los Angeles bureau chief for the *Washington Post*, writes in *Escalante: The Best Teacher in America*, those twelve students "vindicated themselves, Garfield, Escalante, East Los Angeles, the Los Angeles Unified School District, and—many community members declared—Mexican-Americans everywhere." Indeed, the outrage at the presumption of the Princeton-based testing conglomerate that Mexican-American students were unlikely to score well on the AP exam did not fade away. It eventually inspired the film *Stand and Deliver* (to be aired on PBS's "American Playhouse" on March 15), in which "Miami Vice" star and East Los Angeles native Edward James Olmos plays the pudgy, balding dynamo, Escalante.

Mathews's book offers a fuller and more intriguing look at this teacher-celebrity than the film, which is, after all, subject to the dramaturgical limitations of watching kids study calculus. Mathews begins with Escalante in his native Bolivia, where both his parents were ill-paid schoolteachers. After several frustrating years of teaching in La Paz, Escalante immigrated to Los Angeles in 1963 at the age of thirty-three. In addition to his knowledge of higher math and his teaching skills, he brought with him a crafty, profane hardness that one might associate with peasants from the Indian villages on Bolivia's altiplano, where his parents were teaching when he was born. Indeed, through Mathews's eyes we see Escalante as a gruff, manipulative, often brutally honest and, at times, almost malicious eccentric who is willing to try anything to get his students to learn math. I say "learn math" advisedly, because Escalante's single-minded approach leaves little energy or tolerance for students and teachers interested in sports, music, and even history or English. As a result, Mathews points out, Escalante has more than his share of enemies in the Los Angeles public schools. Yet Mathews also shows that Escalante is revered—perhaps not exactly loved, but in many cases that too—by his students.

As the subtitle suggests, this book tries to capitalize on the persistent education reform movement. Yet aside from reminding us that disadvantaged students need to be challenged and good teachers need to be left alone by the kind of bureaucracy Escalante has had to battle, Mathews doesn't have much to say about urban education today. There's no mention of parental choice or voucher schemes, which he may justifiably consider beyond the scope of his book. Mathews does mention merit pay, about which he expresses some perfunctory skepticism.

So the value of this book lies elsewhere. In his sharp-eyed vignettes of Escalante, his students, and their families, Mathews provides an extremely clear, uncluttered window on contemporary Mexican-American urban life. Yet his steadfast reportorial stance also means Mathews does not tell us as much about Mexican-Americans as he might have. Still, he tells us quite a lot.

Mathews goes beyond stale horror stories about big-city education bureaucracies and inner-city teachers who either give up on their students or do nothing innovative that would threaten or challenge their colleagues. These get their due, but Mathews's honesty leads him to the equally frustrating problems a teacher like Escalante has struggling with barrio parents and their kids prone to settling for less than they deserve.

For example, Mathews offers an anecdote that was also depicted in the movie about Escalante. Leticia Rodriguez is the third of seven children of a couple who met in Mexico, came to the United States as cooks, and eventually started their own small restaurant west of downtown Los Angeles—an apparent American success story. Yet when Leticia's trigonometry interfered with her responsibilities at the family's restaurant, where her math skills were desperately needed, Escalante paid a visit to her parents, who were demanding the girl drop his class. After sitting through Escalante's pitch about Leticia's potential, the father (to whom the mother had already deferred) retorted: "Women are just here to get married and have kids and that's all." Despite this pronouncement—and with some threats about violations of the child labor laws—Escalante eventually prevailed, and the girl stayed in his class.

Mathews tells this story not to illustrate the patriarchal nature of barrio families, but to demonstrate how modest are the expectations some barrio parents have for their children. The point is emphasized when Mathews relates an episode about Escalante telephoning a father whose son had missed two algebra homework assignments. "Maybe he's just not right for your class, Mr. Escalante," said the father. "He'll probably work in the body shop when he graduates. That's a good job. Or he can get work as a janitor."

Not all such obstacles are this dramatic. Explaining why Escalante requires his students to stay after school every day until five o'clock, and why he requires students and their parents to sign a contract agreeing to such a requirement, Mathews observes:

> That was to remind the parents as much as their children of the seriousness of the venture. Many adults living in East Los Angeles had never even attended a high school, much less taken a college-level course in one. They had to be persuaded the time might not be better spent in chores at home.

In the same vein, we hear a Mexican-American mother fretting over her daughter's frantic schedule. Getting up at two or three in the morning to study calculus until breakfast, when the seven other people in the two-bedroom house where she lives resume their normal activities and noise, Escalante's student is told: "Your first priority should be your religion, your family and friends. What good is a nice B in some class if you're in the hospital? Lay off the studies. Go have some fun."

Even when such kids manage to excel in school and are offered handsome scholarships from Ivy League colleges, they and their families hesitate and

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Peter Skerry, a research fellow at the American Enterprise Institute, is completing a book on Mexican-American politics.

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often turn them down for something closer to home. "The family might be fractured for survival," Mathews writes, "such as sending a brother or son from the barren farms of Sonora to the job-rich cities of the United States. But it made no sense to travel so far for just the upward mobility of an Ivy League degree." Typical was the decision of the Garfield valedictorian who turned down Harvard in favor of USC. And Mathews mentions several other Garfield graduates who spent a year or so at some elite Eastern university only to return and attend a local school like Cal State-L.A.

To be sure, Mathews also describes how proud many of these parents are of the achievements their kids wring out of themselves, and how frequently they encourage their children to push themselves academically. Still, his point remains (though he doesn't put it quite this way) that among such barrio families there can be a large gap between professed belief in the importance of education and the demands of daily life—in other words, between intentions and actions.

Mathews shows how a good teacher like Jaime Escalante overcomes these obstacles by putting demands on his students that deliberately and directly compete with those of friends and families. In addition to requiring his students (even those with after-school jobs) to stay late every afternoon, Escalante holds study sessions and classes on Saturdays and during the summer. Like any good organizer, he builds a following by keeping the costs of joining high. A vivid example arises when we see him at the classroom door quizzing students who must earn their "ticket" into trigonometry class with a correct answer. Students must fight their way into his classes; once there, they must do as they are told or risk being either thrown out on the spot or transferred to a distant, undesirable high school.

Escalante's students must also submit to his quirky personality and sometimes devastating wit; a typical greeting is, "Good morning. How are you? You're still failing." But Escalante's creativity is best revealed in his penchant for renaming everything and everyone in his domain. Indeed, his students refer to "Escalantese," of which Mathews offers a glossary at the end of the book. "Face mask," for example, refers not to a football penalty but to a mistake at the beginning of a problem. "Doghouse" is synthetic division (whatever that is).

Pleading a bad memory for names, Escalante refers to all his Asian students as "Kung fus," which I'm sure violates some National Education Association guideline. But such treatment is hardly limited to Asians—or even students. An algebra teacher who majored in Italian, and whose teaching methods Escalante does not approve of, is labeled "the Medfly lady." Meanwhile, "Johnny" is an all-purpose name for the boys; the girls, depending on the victim's foible, typically are called Madonna or Elizabeth Taylor. Sometimes the name is more pointed, as with *Gordita* ("my little fat one"). And sometimes accompanying this renaming is ruthless mimicry. For example, Escalante may launch into a football cheer as a young girl on the cheerleading team walks into class late. In any event, his students have returned the favor; half in jest, half in respect, they call him "Kimo," from Kemo sabe, which is of course what the loyal Tonto called the Lone Ranger.

As Mathews makes clear, fostering a team spirit among his students is central to Escalante's approach—hence frequent classroom allusions to team sports. The AP exam itself reflects this approach; it is an outside evaluation for which preparation, Escalante insists, binds students and teacher together. For just such a reason, he has his quicker students tutoring his slower ones. Similarly, he turns the beginning of class each day into a small pep rally, complete with warm-up exercises and heavy metal rock music with students singing and pounding desk tops in time with Escalante's lead. So much for Allan Bloom.

Finally, Escalante outfits his AP calculus class with jackets and sweatshirts emblazoned with his logo—a fierce bulldog wearing dark glasses and Escalante's trademark motorman's cap. In typical style, he quips to his students, "The jackets cost twenty dollars. I'll charge you twenty-five, five dollars for the teacher."

Unswayed by academic dogma that dismisses cultural explanations of poverty as "blaming the victim," Mathews reveals the variety of obstacles—bureaucratic, economic, *and* cultural—impeding the mobility of barrio youth today. Yet precisely because he remains a journalist and self-consciously rejects any "search for an enveloping theory," Mathews does not fully mine the implications of his findings. His Anglo readers thereby miss out on some much-needed perspective on Hispanics.

Today, Americans don't know much about Hispanics, but they know what they like. And what they like is the focus on family in Hispanic cultures. Hispanics have picked up on this theme (particularly during the Reagan years) and have taken to flaunting their family values—sometimes as if they believed the rest of America was raised on one big Anglo kibbutz.

But this love-feast over the family, to which liberals now also pay lip service, has obscured the fact that strong families can be a mixed blessing. For when not zealously committed to education (as Jewish and Asian families tend to be), and when so tightly knit that individual initiative is discouraged, strong families can hinder the social and economic mobility of their members.

Jaime Escalante knows this. So do Mexican-American school administrators, truant officers, community organizers, and activists. So did earlier generations of community leaders in New York City, for whom the "Italian problem," as described by Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan in *Beyond the Melting Pot*, referred to the high truancy and drop-out rates among Italian schoolchildren, whose strong families tended to undervalue education.

With such perspective, Mathews could have scrutinized the effectiveness of Escalante's teaching methods. Reading this book, I was struck that barrio youngsters, enveloped in their not always harmonious but nevertheless intense families, might well find academic achievement a rather isolating experience—and not just the loneliness of studying, but the more subtle psychological dimension of venturing into alien territory where close family members can be no guide. Mathews touches on this point when he observes that "students followed his [Escalante's] idiosyncratic ways because he amused them and made them feel part of a brave corps on a secret, impossible mission." But going no further, Mathews misses an important point.

Far beyond goading, cajoling, and insulting his students into academic achievement, Escalante creates an alternative setting in which achievement leads not to loneliness or isolation but to participation in an exclusive group. It is certainly no accident that one of the administrators with whom Escalante has most effectively teamed is an East Los Angeles native and former training officer in the Army, where group dynamics are also relied on to train young men and women. Similarly, the team camaraderie that Escalante fosters corresponds to the rites of teenage gangs—serious competitors for the attention of barrio youth in Los Angeles. Mathews does make passing reference to such parallels with Escalante's methods, but he neglects to explore them.

This broader perspective missing in Mathews's account also highlights the limitations of Escalante's methods. For example, some, including Escalante himself, have noted that the striking similarities in AP test responses which prompted ETS to charge the twelve Garfield students with cheating have much to do with Escalante's heavy reliance on drills and cookbook problem-solving techniques. And in his attempts to demystify difficult math concepts, Escalante apparently relies so much on group effort that individual creativity is neglected. As a result, he motivates and trains his students to achieve beyond what would ordinarily be expected of them, but they may still be too group-oriented and insufficiently individualistic.

At least this possibility comes to mind when Mathews depicts the specific difficulties Escalante and his students experienced dealing with the cheating charge. When he learned that the AP results for several of his students were being questioned, Escalante telephoned ETS and was told the subject could not be discussed because "It is a confidential matter, a one-to-one thing. You're not involved with it." Mathews shows Escalante and his team stymied by ETS's instinctive and thorough-going effort to deal with each student in a shroud of meritocratic privacy. In the end, Escalante never did get the chance to look at the disputed exams and explain how the pattern of answers might have reflected his teaching style.

Thus, it may be that Jaime Escalante is not "the best teacher in America." But he is probably the best teacher in East Los Angeles. The distinction underlines the moderation and patience we will all need as we cope with the inevitable difficulties experienced by millions of Hispanic immigrants and their children as they settle in our cities. For if Jaime Escalante's methods do not maximize individual creativity, they help provide young Mexican-Americans with the skills and confidence on which they and their children can build.

If they follow the pattern of other immigrants, Hispanics will be absorbed only slowly into our highly individualistic society. And the process will likely be a paradoxical one, whereby immigrants become Americans not as individuals but as members of their ethnic group. Yet to judge by the past, many Americans will lack the patience and insight into their own history to appreciate this pattern. Like reformers at the turn of the century, when we last received comparable numbers of immigrants, some Americans expect too much, too soon, of today's newcomers. But as the example of Jaime Escalante serves to remind us, it would be equally unwise to expect too little. □

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EUROPEANS

Jane Kramer/Farrar Straus Giroux/561 pp. $22.95

Mark Lilla

Le McJournal est arrivé. In the first week of last December, on newsstands across the continent and in Britain, Europeans could purchase the inaugural issue of their first daily transnational newspaper, Robert Maxwell's *The European*. And a sorry thing it is, a monstrous crossbreed of *USA Today* and a company newsletter. Like "McPaper," "*McJournal*" is less a work of journalism than a monument to modern computer graphics, with roughly a third of its pages covered by high-quality, four-toned photographic reproductions, and half of the back page devoted to a color-coded, state-of-the-art weather map. But where *The European* really manages to outdistance *USA Today* is in its shameless advocacy of self-satisfaction—in this case, about the approaching economic integration of Europe beginning in 1992. In two-inch bold type, over a picture of Francois Mitterrand and Helmut Kohl uncomfortably holding hands, Maxwell announces that "WE HAVE A DREAM." The front page is dominated by a militaristic image from the recent ceremony marking the interment of Jean Monnet, the "father of Europe," in the French Pantheon. And sprinkled among the articles by Henry Kissinger and Peter Ustinov on the importance of European unity we find the smiling portraits of European celebrities—a company president, a soccer coach—who have decided to join the '92 team, each under the headline "They all say yes!"

"Just say no!" one is tempted to cry, if only in self-defense. For, as we approach '92, the flood of Eurokitsch is reaching such heights here that the Europeanization of Europe is beginning to look more threatening than its Americanization. It will never happen, of course. Just as Europe was never really "Americanized," but simply produced a half dozen home-grown perversions of an imagined American culture, so too it will never be "Europeanized." Young Parisian lawyers can be expected to hunt down jobs in Brussels after '92; Spaniards might start buying more British lamb; and soldiers from Hamburg and Marseille could even find themselves sitting in the same tank. But the idea of a transnational European culture arising from these exchanges is only put forward seriously by those who have a special interest in believing it, like government arts administrators and Esperantists. If a century of economic integration has not succeeded in making *Milanese* and *Siciliani* into *Italiani*, it is not about to turn Basques and Bavarians into "Europeans."

What a relief it is, then, from the "Europe" of the admen to come upon Jane Kramer's *Europeans*, a selection of her *New Yorker* pieces published over the past decade in that magazine's "Letter from Europe" department. Although I have read and clipped her articles faithfully for several years, I confess to some apprehension on first seeing the collection, its title, and its fulsome blurbs. But reading through it I came to see that she chose her plural title with care: this is our most definitive field-guide to European disunity.

In writing of "Europeans," Miss Kramer has given us a portrait of the anti-"Europe" in which the French, Germans, Italians, English, Swiss, Hungarians, and Portuguese make their unstable home today.

Miss Kramer writes portrait-essays, with all the advantages and limitations accompanying that form. Among the advantages is the freedom to focus on the particular—a small-town election, a minor scandal—in order to measure the exact contours and proportions of the habits and prejudices that constitute a national spirit. If one has lived in the countries she writes about, her skill will seem downright uncanny, for she is able to capture features of this spirit that seemed to defy formulation. Her piece on Armando Verdiglione, for instance, a "psychoanalytic" charlatan who bilked patients, businesses, and governments out of millions, says as much about the Italian capacity for self-deception as anything written by Luigi Barzini or Leonardo Sciascia. And she is also alert enough to see that although Romans are quite happy to display Pope John Paul's picture on the wall, they do not like this Polish intruder, whom they regard as "a pilgrim from the Moral Majority who has strayed, by chance, into the *dolce vita* and decided to blast it with righteousness."

Essays on the psychological limbo of living in West Berlin, or the edgy propriety of Zurich, have the same authentic air. But it is when Miss Kramer turns to France, where she makes her home, that her "insider" reports become most valuable. Whether she is writing about the peculiar status of *Le Monde* in the constellation of Parisian political-intellectual life, or the political background to the Paribas financial scandal, or the French reactions to the bombing of the Greenpeace boat in 1985, there is seldom a false note. She knows things. She knows why French prime ministers also want to be mayors; she understands the important social status of the *inspecteurs de finance*; she can explain the powers of the still-medieval guild of French bailiffs. She can, *petit a petit*, help us to hear the full overtones and undertones to *la France* in the French vocabulary, and why it is that "the ruling class of France has given its sons to the state the way Italians give sons to the Church."

Miss Kramer's understanding of Europeans does not exempt them from her criticism or, occasionally, her disgust. The Austrians who excused Kurt Waldheim do not escape, nor do the French politicians who cut deals with Jean-Marie Le Pen's racist National Front. She is especially severe with the French, and has somehow managed to withstand the temptation to identify with the seductive self-justifications of Parisian discourse while still making her home within it. She notes that "French children weep for Oliver Twist in the workhouse and for lonely David Copperfield, but they do not weep for Sydney Carton on his way to the guillotine." And she wonders whether, "if Mitterrand makes people here uncomfortable, it may be because they see in his crafty vanity an acknowledgment of their own."

There is a tilt to these criticisms, however, one that is neither geographic nor ideological. It reflects instead an occasionally misplaced identification with the "little guy" who serves as the essay's subject, a partiality that can give Miss Kramer's political and economic reflections the dreaminess that the front of her magazine has recently cultivated. The profile-essay is a marvelous vehicle for exploring the difficulties of a single French farm family, but we cannot expect it to inform us about the real costs and benefits of EEC agricultural policy. A German town's desire to keep a nearby mountain both public and green is understandable, but the decision to hand it over to NATO must surely require another, more general, sort of calculation than the one she gives here. Finishing this collection, the reader is left with the vague impression that economic growth and anonymous institutions—governments, businesses, unions—have done nothing but betray the European towns and citizens they were meant to serve.

This is, I think, the necessary consequence of using the *New Yorker* essay form to treat of certain social developments. One can imagine compelling profiles of towns turned upside-down by the arrival and departure of factories, which has certainly happened; one would have more trouble writing an interesting portrait that reflected the quite real improvements in nutrition, mobility, public health, and life expectancy that almost all Europeans have experienced since the war. Traditional villages with extended families make for interesting reading, while ambitious sons who finally have a chance to get out from under papa's thumb, to buy houses and cars, fail to hold our interest. Yet these are Europeans, too, ones who do not find their home in these pages. To tell their story one would need to consult actuarial tables and statistics, use graphs and footnotes—none of which, I'm afraid, are on the *New Yorker* style sheet.

Yet when she remains within the natural limits of the form she has chosen, when she explores national character instead of the national interest, Miss Kramer is a master. And she is, so far as I know, the only American writer seriously engaged in this sort of enterprise today. Ordinary American journalists no longer have the leisure or patience to entertain such a project. Their networks fly them in and out of

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Mark Lilla, a former editor of the Public Interest, *lives in Paris.*

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foreign capitals with one change of clothes, or their newspapers rotate them quickly through the bureaus—from China, to the metropolitan desk, to Paris, to Washington—in the mistaken belief that facility, not familiarity, is the hallmark of good journalism. With the possible exception of the *Atlantic*, the *New Yorker* is the only American publication that still offers its writers the conditions under which reflective and well-considered foreign reporting might be undertaken.

One wonders, though, whether there is still an American audience for this sort of journalism. I am told that *Europeans* has been getting rave American reviews, none of which have I seen. But I wonder how many American reviewers really understand it, for it makes real demands on our attention and our prejudices. Americans should find it hard to reconcile themselves with Miss Kramer's portraits of disunity, bred as they are to believe that national differences arose from the state of nature through poverty, ignorance, religion, or war, and will disappear with them. (Assuming marginal tax rates are kept down too.) They now find it hard to imagine an ephemeral bond of national character surviving in a region grown rich, educated, secular, and finally at peace. They have lost the habit of speaking intelligently about national character because they fear being called racists or hearing lectures on the moral perils of stereotyping. So they mouth the bureaucratic platitudes of affirmative action at home, but find themselves completely at sea when they use the same language to understand the exotic intrigues of the Old World. We Americans have become both too lazy and too pious, I fear, to appreciate the real lessons of Jane Kramer's *Europeans*, and will instead turn to publications like *The European* to find a phoney, white-bread cosmopolitanism that looks so reassuringly like our own. □

EDMUND BURKE: HIS LIFE AND OPINIONS
Stanley Ayling/St. Martin's Press/715 pp. $26.00

Maurice Cranston

The life of Edmund Burke has always been something of a mystery—partly because he chose to make it one. In eighteenth-century England, it would hardly have been possible for an Irishman with a Roman Catholic mother and no money to acquire a seat in Parliament and a prominent place in the Whig party without keeping a good many things dark. One consequence of this is that Burke has had to wait a very long time for anything like an adequate biography. However, the appearance in 1978 of the *Correspondence of Edmund Burke*, in a magisterial edition by the American scholar Thomas W. Copeland, brought to light much that had previously been veiled, and Burke now awaits his definitive biographer. Stanley Ayling is not that definitive biographer, but his book is more than acceptable as a provisional biography, soundly based on the researches of Copeland and distinguished by the three great virtues of literary style: brevity, clarity, and euphony.

Burke has the reputation in the textbooks of being a turncoat, a vigorous champion of the American Revolution in 1776 who became a bitter critic of the French Revolution in 1789; a liberal who, for no very creditable reason, became an arch-conservative. By tracing the evolution of Burke's political opinions, his biographer shows that this is a false notion based on a failure to understand either what Burke was saying or the situation in which he found himself.

Burke was a Christian without being a sectarian. Coming from a family half Anglican, half Catholic, and being educated by Quakers, he made his own distillation of the essentials of Christianity from these competing conceptions of its truths, and to those essentials he clung with steadfast faith. It was his consolation and support in his climb up the greasy pole of an English political career, from the back streets of journalism to the forefront of parliamentary eminence. He could support the American revolutionists in 1776 because he could see that they were godly men "appealing to heaven" (as Locke had once described the taking up of arms in the defense of historic rights); he condemned the French revolutionists of 1789 because they were rationalists, trying to overthrow their church and king, and remodel society on the impious assumption that heaven could be built on earth.

But the man of faith was also a man of action—bold, it would appear from what Ayling reports, to the point of recklessness. At school and college in Ireland, Burke already displayed his undoubted talent for writing, and against all advice to earn a safe living in the law in London, he chose both to abandon that profession in favor of literature at the age of twenty-six, and to acquire a wife at the age of twenty-eight. Significantly, his first published book was an attack on the anti-Christian ideas of Lord Bolingbroke called *A Vindication of Natural Society*. He wrote in the form of a satire, and like many satires it was not well understood by readers and enjoyed only a mixed success.

Literature did not make young Burke's fortune or even make up for the loss of the allowance that his father cut off. So Burke turned to journalistic hack work, then to editing the *Annual Register* and accepting a commission, which he never completed, to write a history of England. His need for money was all the greater since Burke was very much a family man, having besides a wife, a brother, Richard Burke, and a distant kinsman, William Burke, whom he called his cousin, on his hands. When Burke sought the acquaintance of various grandees in the hope of securing some of the patronage that was on offer in the then expanding British Empire, he wanted that patronage more for his dependents than for himself. His own ambitions were less to be employed by the state than to legislate for it in the House of Commons. That required a different kind of patronage—the backing of a party leader and the friendship of someone who controlled an available seat—most elections being simply fixed. In the end he found a leader in Lord Rockingham, who ran the Whig party, and a rich friend in Lord Verney, who arranged for Burke to be elected

Maurice Cranston is professor of political science at the London School of Economics.

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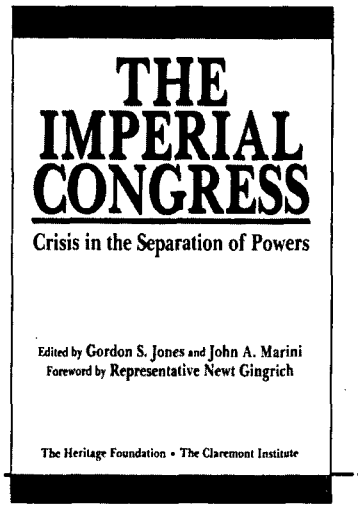
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as member of Parliament for Wendover at the age of thirty-six.

Burke had already decided that a man could not command any respect in Parliament unless he was himself a landowner, and so, with the help of mortgages and loans and perhaps some financial tricks of one kind and another, he acquired a large country house in Buckinghamshire; and there, in company with numerous Irish kinsfolk, he kept up the appearance—despite all the debts and the delapidation of the fabric—of a gentleman of substance. In Parliament Burke always spoke and acted as if he were himself as grand as any Whig grandee.

He demonstrated his independence to marvelous effect after he had left the seat at Wendover for Bristol and informed his constituents there, in an immortal letter, that he did not, as they imagined, represent Bristol, and its petty local interests, but England and the interests of the entire Kingdom. To the Whig party, Burke was a one-man think tank; not just a speechwriter, but a political theorist and parliamentary strategist. The rewards he received never matched his services.

Ayling remarks that Burke was not considered to be "Cabinet material," despite his being "the brains and maybe the conscience of the party." When the Duke of Portland was putting together a Whig administration in the 1780s, the best job he was willing to offer Burke was that of paymaster, although he did at least propose as well to grant him a life pension of £2,000. It seems that Burke's parliamentary colleagues mistrusted his brilliance as much as they admired it. Sir William Young described him as "folly personified, shaking his cap and bells under the laurels of genius."

It was during Burke's six years as M.P. for Bristol that the American Revolution took place, and Burke achieved his greatest fame in Parliament as a champion of the Americans' claim to freedom. "No way is open," he warned the House of Commons, "but to comply with the American spirit as necessary; or, if you please, to submit to it as to a necessary evil. The question is not whether you have the right to render your people miserable, but whether it is not in your interest to make them happy."

Burke uttered these words in a speech that lasted two-and-a-half hours. His leader, Rockingham, congratulated him, but the majority in the House were unmoved by his argument—his constituents in Bristol even less so, since they suffered financially from the American troubles. It is worth noting that Burke did not speak of the Americans having a "right" to independence. He said that the Americans, if only because they were mostly of English origin, had a "fierce love of liberty"—and "an Englishman is the unfittest person on earth to argue another Englishman into slavery." He warned the English that they would never overcome the Americans' love of liberty by force, and since sound politics was the art of the possible, they should yield graciously to American demands by negotiation.

This speech was perhaps the most celebrated of all Burke's speeches in Parliament. His most celebrated address to the public was his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, which he wrote soon after the storming of the Bastille in 1789 and published in 1790. When the French Revolution first began, Burke believed, as most people did, that the French were simply out to copy the English Revolution of 1688 and replace their absolutist monarchy with a constitutional one. But whereas most liberals and progressives in England went on thinking this for the next few years, Burke realized in a matter of weeks that something quite different was happening in France. The French Revolution had been taken over by the ideology of human perfectability, which Burke associated with the philosophy of Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Burke saw that fanatical left-wing politicians, backed up by a hysterical mob filled with envy for ancient privilege, were out to transform France into an army or anthill of equals, in which men would be "forced to be free" by means of Terror. Months before Robespierre sent his victims in droves to the guillotine, Burke discerned that that would be an inevitable outcome of the kind of revolution on which the French had embarked.

The English Revolution of 1688 and the American Revolution of 1776, Burke argued, were both largely conservative revolutions, dismissing despotic innovations in order to restore traditional liberties and institutions. Both sought to defend established property and established religion, which the French Revolutionists were destroying, unleashing more and more violence in the process. The French enterprise of transforming the whole of society in a matter of weeks was the utmost folly. "If justice requires reform," he wrote, "the work itself requires more minds than one age can furnish. You would not cure great public evils by resolving that there should be no more monarchs, nor ministers of state, nor of the gospel, no interpreters of law, no general officers, no public councils. You might change the names. . . . But wise men will apply their remedies to vices, not to names; to the causes of evil which are permanent, not to the transitory modes in which they appear."

These last words encapsulate the whole philosophy by which Burke's life in politics was inspired, and which he tried in all his speeches and publications to impress upon others—namely that imperfection is part of the unchanging human condition, but that specific abuses and injustice can, with great effort, sometimes be corrected. Far from his career in politics being a movement from liberalism to conservatism, he developed—if he developed at all—from a conservative reformer into a reforming conservative; political beliefs that always went together with the faith of a nonsectarian Christian. □

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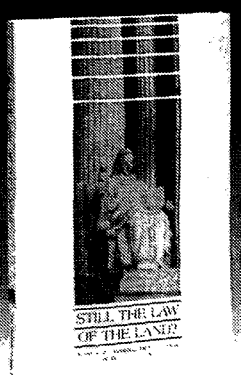

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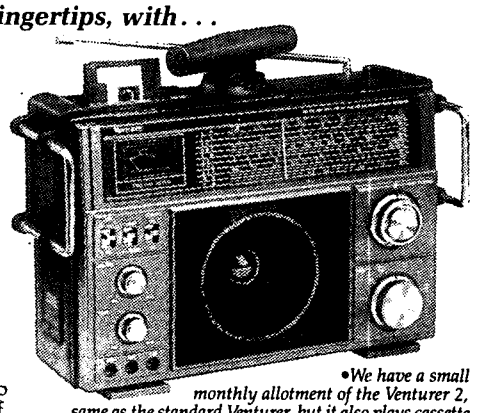

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FINAL DISCLOSURE: THE FULL TRUTH ABOUT THE ASSASSINATION OF PRESIDENT KENNEDY

David W. Belin/Charles Scribner's Sons/249 pp. $19.95

Karl O'Lessker

David Belin's *Final Disclosure* purports to be "the full truth about the assassination of President Kennedy," but the first thing to be said about the book is that it contains absolutely nothing new about the assassination. Having served as counsel to the Warren Commission and as executive director of the Rockefeller Commission of CIA Activities Within the United States, Belin merely offers a reprise of the Warren Commission findings, which have, after all, been in the public record since 1964. To these he adds material from the Rockefeller Commission report, which has been in the public record since 1975, and from the House Assassination Committee report, which was published in 1979.

And Belin discovers, to his own great satisfaction, that the Warren Commission was absolutely dead solid perfect in its conclusions—the only admissible reservation being that the CIA concealed from the commission its ongoing efforts to assassinate Dr. Castro, who might have taken umbrage and thus sicced his admirer, Lee Harvey Oswald, on President Kennedy, a possibility that, alas, we shall never be able to explore, thanks to the well-intentioned but violent intervention of Jack Ruby.

The bare-bones conclusions of the Warren Commission can be easily summarized: First, that Oswald acted alone in shooting Kennedy and Officer J. D. Tippit (who was killed in a shoot-out at a downtown theater less than an hour after the assassination); and second, that Jack Ruby acted on impulse in killing Oswald, in order to spare Mrs. Kennedy the anguish of appearing at Oswald's trial (Ruby also did it, in his words, "for the Jews of America").

From the beginning there were grave doubts about these and other conclusions of the Warren Commission. For example, how could Oswald, an indifferent marksman, have been so murderously accurate with two of his three shots, fired at a moving target from the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository building? How could a single bullet have exploded the President's head and still retain enough velocity to pass through Governor John Connally's body—and then later be found in a pristine state? Were there three shots—the number fired from Oswald's rifle—or more than three, as some witnesses claimed? And what of the possibility that Oswald and/or Ruby acted as agents for other parties—Cuba or the Mafia or the CIA, or some combination of them?

These are only a few of the multitude of issues that have plagued all efforts to reach a consensus on the assassination. So peculiar have been some of the circumstances—the disappearance of Kennedy's brain and crucial notes from the autopsy, for instance, or the unaccountable sums of money which Oswald had from time to time—that theories have sprung up (and been published) that would do credit to Robert Ludlum. Other, more sober theories suffer from the great defect (as Belin points out) of coming into being only by omitting inconvenient facts. Still others, however, are not so easily dismissed, and these Belin handles by ignoring them.

In fact, Belin's treatment of accounts that differ from the Warren Commission report borders on the hysterical. Everyone who has ever proposed an alternate theory he labels an "assassination sensationalist," a phrase he uses unfailingly throughout the book. Thus such careful investigators as Sylvia Meagher (*Accessories After the Fact*), Josiah Thompson (*Six Seconds in Dallas*), and Anthony Summers (*Conspiracy*) are lumped together with such undeniable "sensationalists" as Mark Lane, George O'Toole, and David Lifton, among many others. Meagher and Summers he mentions only once, and that in connection with the murder of Officer Tippit, while Thompson's important work he ignores altogether.

Most egregious, in my view, is his refusal to consider Anthony Summers's remarkable investigative reporting on Oswald's movements and associations. If there is anything we need to know about Oswald, it is whether he acted alone, as the Warren Commission would have it, or was involved in some sort of conspiracy. Not all of Summers's findings may be correct, yet even if only some of them are, they are enormously suggestive. But Belin has nothing to say about them.

To be sure, he makes a nearly unassailable case for Oswald's guilt as the murderer of Officer Tippit and as at least one of the gunmen who fired at President Kennedy. (Alternative accounts have held that Oswald was, in his own words, "a patsy," who might even have been impersonated for some time prior to the assassination—the so-called Second Oswald theory.) The evidence accumulated by the Warren Commission in these matters is almost as strong as Belin thinks it is—though here, too, he refuses to acknowledge some disturbing evidence to the contrary.

But the rest of *Final Disclosure*, far from clearing away other doubts about the commission's report, only intensifies them. This is because Belin devotes almost half his book to discussing the CIA's misdeeds, including its involvement in a variety of efforts to assassinate Castro. And he cites Castro's warning of September 1963 that if those efforts didn't cease, he would order retaliation against America's leaders. Now, given Oswald's apparent devotion to Castro, and given his still-mysterious trip to Mexico City that same month, it is not entirely "sensationalist" to wonder whether there might not have been some connection between the two men. Indeed, Belin raises just that question at the very end of the book. But he considers not one shred of evidence beyond what the Warren Commission turned up.

More disturbing, he weighs none of the evidence that has been found concerning Oswald's other possible associations—some of them bitterly *anti*-Castro. For example, consider the fact that Oswald's employer during his New Orleans days, in the spring of 1963, was a wealthy backer of the Crusade to Free Cuba Committee; and

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Karl O'Lessker, a senior editor of The American Spectator *and adjunct senior research fellow at the Hudson Institute, is a member of the Indiana Utility Regulatory Commission.*

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Oswald's own one-man pro-Castro operation was headquartered in the same small building that provided offices for two violently anti-Castro organizations.

And another among the scores of intriguing facts: on the night he was arrested, Oswald tried to call a number in the Raleigh, North Carolina, area. Secret Service agents blocked the call. There is no record of his knowing anyone there. But according to Vincent Marchetti, a former high-ranking CIA official, Naval Intelligence in those years operated a secret training facility for phoney defectors to the Soviet Union.

Does this mean anything? Belin chooses to ignore it. Or what about the fact that in 1960, when Oswald was living in the USSR, no less a figure than J. Edgar Hoover sent a memorandum to the State Department's security office warning that "there is a possibility that an impostor is using Oswald's birth certificate"? You won't learn about these matters in David Belin's "full truth about the assassination" because they weren't in the Warren Commission report.

One last uncontroverted fact, which the House Assassination Committee was able to adduce but which Belin passes over in silence: three hours after the President's death, the always-broke Jack Ruby showed up at his bank—where the balance in his business account was only $246—with $7,000 in large bills stuffed in his pockets. Where did he get the money? The Warren Commission never asked and no one to this day has a clue. But Belin is satisfied with Ruby's assurances to his rabbi, and the rabbi's assurances to Belin, that Ruby had no hand in any conspiracy. Well, that's one way to come to a conclusion about a central issue in an assassination inquiry. But it would have been more compelling if the Warren Commission had accepted Ruby's desperate plea to be allowed to go to Washington "to tell you the truth"—a plea that Chief Justice Warren personally rejected on the curious grounds that "it could not be done."

There is a great deal more of this sort of thing, as I reported in these pages back in October 1981—high-quality investigative material developed by the House committee and by independent researchers such as Summers and Thompson. But Belin ignores practically all of it and focuses instead on the one or two points where the committee or a particular author turned out to be wrong.

As gamesmanship, that's a pretty clever way to play; and certainly any competent lawyer (and Belin is a very good one) would recognize the tactic. But for anyone interested in learning more about the dreadful events of November 1963, *Final Disclosure* is an almost total waste of time. □

GEORGE WASHINGTON: A COLLECTION

Edited by W. B. Allen/Liberty Fund/561 pp. $22.95

William McGurn

Brothers: I am a Warrior. My words are few and plain; but I will make good what I say.
—George Washington
Speech to the Delaware chiefs
May 12, 1779

How refreshing for the chiefs to hear such straightforward language from the mouth of a white man. In this address the Commander in Chief of the Continental Army told the Delaware that cooperation with the United States would be rewarded as much as confrontation would be punished; they had his word on that. Such was the popular trust reposited in the name George Washington that less than a decade later the establishment of the American nation would rest on much the same foundation: his honor.

Two centuries of accumulated political hagiography have unfortunately left the Father of the American nation more myth than man. In sharp contrast to Lincoln, whose backwoods Illinois manner and awkward physique make his memory so human, Washington remains the marble bust in the pantheon—America's cold Cincinnatus. But now the Liberty Fund has taken a singular step toward a more lifelike portrait with the publication of *George Washington: A Collection.* Edited by William B. Allen, a professor of government at Harvey Mudd College at Claremont, the work assembles some 235 letters, notes, and speeches as brushstrokes to fill in some of the missing detail surrounding the first President. Professor Allen explains that the collection is designed to be "a tool of general information" and not a critical study, and so apart from some helpful introductory notes to each section, he remains unobtrusively in the background. The voice is Washington's own.

The story that thus unfolds is of a life fixed on one central idea: the union of thirteen fractious British colonies into a single nation. "Nothing I more sincerely wish than a union of the colonies," writes Washington in April 1756. The time was the French and Indian War, Washington was in the service of the Crown, and the words were therefore in the context of colonial self-defense. Yet when his sovereign's Parliament began deliberately to trample on "the valuable rights of Americans, confirmed to them by charter," Washington easily came to argue for an *independent* union. In today's climate, such single-minded devotion to a nation that hardly existed outside his own circle would have Washington dismissed as an ideologue. George III would be the pragmatist.

Without union, in fact, the defeat of the British appeared to Washington a colossal waste. "We now have a National character to establish," said the General, still speaking of a United States before it was a fact. In his announcement of the end to the War of Independence, he referred to it as the "laying of the foundation of a great Empire" upon which "the destiny of unborn Millions" would depend. The basis for this experiment would be liberty—properly understood, as they said back in those days:

Liberty, when it degenerates into licentiousness, begets confusion, and frequently ends in Tyranny or some woeful catastrophe,

William McGurn is deputy editorial page editor of the Asian Wall Street Journal.

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and to suppose that the Affairs of this Continent can be conducted by thirteen distinct Sovereignties, or by one without adequate powers, are mere solecisms in politicks. It is in our United capacity we are known, and have a place among the Nations of the Earth.

Nor was the General above hyperbole in pushing the point. In his famous Circular Letter to the States he likened Americans to "actors on a most conspicuous Theatre, which seems to be peculiarly designed by Providence for the display of human greatness and Felicity." Characteristically, he added that if his countrymen should fail in this endeavor "the fault will be intirely [sic] their own."

This dry appreciation for the human capacity for mischief is a side of Washington all too obscured by tales of cherry trees and wooden teeth. As a man of the Enlightenment he obviously believed in the primacy of liberty and reason. Yet as a seasoned officer the General had little patience for the refashioning of mankind. "We must take the passions of Men as Nature has given them," he writes to John Bannister from Valley Forge, though he did not necessarily mean to put up with them. Washington's Orders of the Day, for example, are full of references to soldiers being court-martialed and executed for various infractions; there is no hint of agonized waffling. Certainly the letters also show that he was always willing to go the extra mile, but no further. In his second term as President he showed this by calling out 15,000 militiamen to deal with Pennsylvania farmers who were defying a congressional tax on spirits and had rejected all reasonable overtures. This was much the same sentiment made explicit in his second Presidential Address. "If we desire to avoid insult," he said, "we must be able to repel it." Evidently the man from Mount Vernon was of the speak-softly-and-carry-a-big-stick school.

Washington showed similar resolve on political issues when he thought Congress was poaching on his executive powers. At the end of his first term, he refused a House request to disclose the instructions he had given his emissary in negotiating the Treaty of Paris with Great Britain. He told Congress that, although he had "no disposition to withhold any information which the duty of my station will permit," he would "admit then a right in the House to demand, and to have as a matter of course, all the papers respecting a negotiation with a foreign power, would be to establish a dangerous precedent." It was an elegant, eighteenth-century version of "Read My Lips."

Finally, there is the private side. On learning of the marriage of the Marquis de Chastellux, for example, Washington takes a break from his furious lobbying on behalf of the draft constitution to offer an amused commentary on the fatal lure of domestic felicity. "A wife!" he writes. "Well my dear marquis, I can hardly refrain from smiling to find you caught at last." There is his long correspondence with Lafayette, which as years passed would come to reflect Washington's concern at the appalling developments in Revolutionary Paris. And there is, too, Washington's last will and testament, in which the President granted all his slaves freedom upon the death of his wife, with the firm command that his wishes in this matter were not to be crossed by the sale of these slaves "under any pretence whatsoever."

Still, concern for the Union is never far away in Professor Allen's collection; as Washington himself admitted to Alexander Hamilton, "all my private letters have teemed with these sentiments." For all this passion, however, what also emerges from this correspondence is that Washington's chief political virtue was prudence: firmness of principle matched by flexibility of means. In the city that today bears his name this is a lesson worth reviewing,

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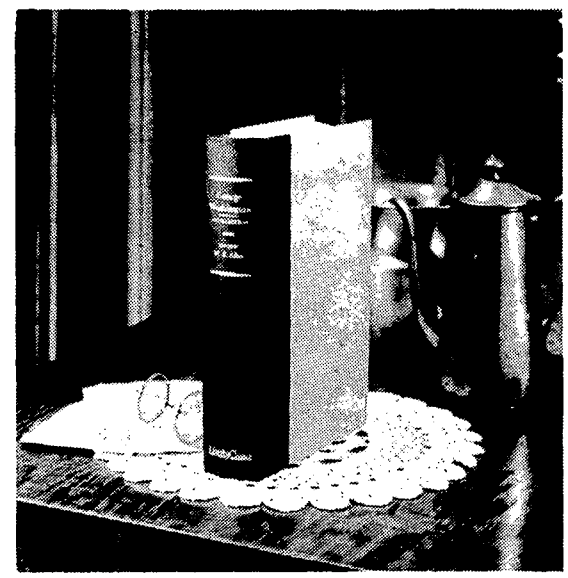

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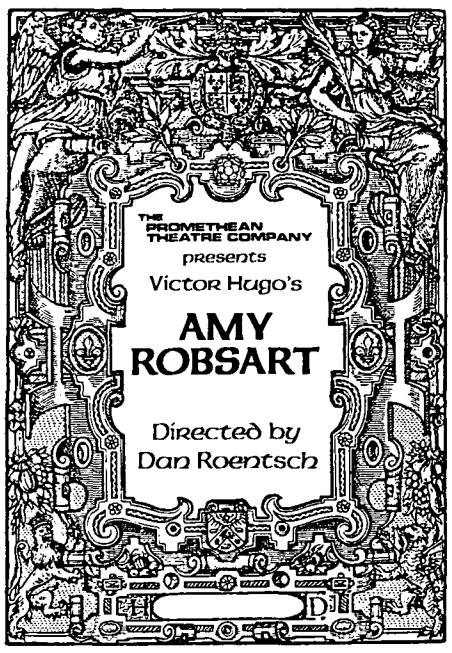
in that it was precisely the former that permitted the latter.

"Brothers: I am a Warrior. My words are few and plain; but I will make good what I say." As he would do so often in the years to come, whether the issue be pay for his officers or passage of the Constitution, the sole guarantee Washington would give was his word, as though that alone were enough. It is a measure of the man's standing that it almost always was. □



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CORRESPONDENCE

(continued from page 9)

sonae: they demanded that readers educate themselves to understand the new literature.) Thus, the writer as literate philistine has become a part of England's mental landscape.

Kenner is obviously annoyed at this situation. As he sees it, important poets (Tomlinson, Bunting) are ignored because the English reading public has been told the proper response to modernism is laughter. Good books are supposed to be easy. When criticizing Philip Larkin, Kenner is clearly focusing on the average joe role that Larkin cultivated ("Who's Jorge Luis Borges?") rather than Larkin's poetry (which Kenner praises).

Because Kenner's subject is the fate of modernism in England, he is under no obligation to discuss every good twentieth-century English writer. Moreover, he is explicit on this point: "So intricate is our story that narration must be highly selective. . . .Many good writers who simply did their job—Ivy Compton-Burnett comes to mind—are simply left unmentioned." (This simple statement of intentions can be found on page seven. Mr. McCartney must have missed it.)

Finally, anyone familiar with Hugh Kenner's criticism should know that he doesn't esteem difficult books merely because they are difficult. In the past, Kenner has praised such nonmodernist texts as the letters of Shaw, the apologetics of Chesterton, and the detective novels of Ross Macdonald.

If *TAS* is not going to cover culture accurately, maybe it shouldn't cover it at all.

—Jiet Heer
Toronto, Ontario

George McCartney replies:
Whenever I'm charged with provocation and ignorance through the U.S. mails, I enjoy taking a moment to respond. Call it one of my clubbish eccentricities.

Now let me see where to begin. Let's consider Mr. Heer's admonishment to "cover culture accurately" or not "cover it at all." While some might think this excessively stern, I couldn't agree more. And to demonstrate my support of Mr. Heer's challenging severity, I'd like to point out how he himself might improve as a culture coverer. He might start by re-reading Hugh Kenner. There he'll find ample warrant for my comments regarding *A Sinking Island* and *The Mechanic Muse.*

Mr. Heer says that modernism is Kenner's subject in *A Sinking Island* and that I have no right to suggest otherwise. Kenner, however, begins by telling us that "one theme this book addresses" is "how the mother-country of 'English' became a headquarters for articulate Philistia" (pp. 5-6). He then spends the next 240 pages alternately patronizing and dismissing writers he thinks inferior to his canonical roster of modernists. The only justification he provides for treating them this way is that they've not prostrated themselves before his version of the modernist altar. This, it seems, gives Kenner leave to hand down ex cathedra pronouncements: Ivy Compton-Burnett was one of those "good writers who simply did their job"; Anthony Powell's *A Dance to the Music of Time* is "leaden"; Evelyn Waugh is a "literary genius of an unmistakable if minor order" who "plagiarized" Ford Madox Ford's *Parade's End*; Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* suggests the "high-toned dither" found in the *New Yorker.* And on and on, with almost never a pause to present evidence, argue a case, or otherwise do the work of criticism. Finally, he concludes that "it's time to announce explicitly the post-war news that . . . there's no longer an English literature" because there is no "center" around which talent can gather. Which means, if anything, that talent no longer gathers around the center Kenner has made his critical turf. If this isn't high-horse, I confess I don't know what is.

It seems clear to me that Kenner had something more in mind than "the fate of modernism in England," as Mr. Heer so delicately puts it. There's no mistaking that one of his primary objectives is to belittle everything that doesn't fit his definition of literary worth. Kenner is entitled to his opinions, but, if he wants to air them publicly, he should back them with something more than sneering condescension.

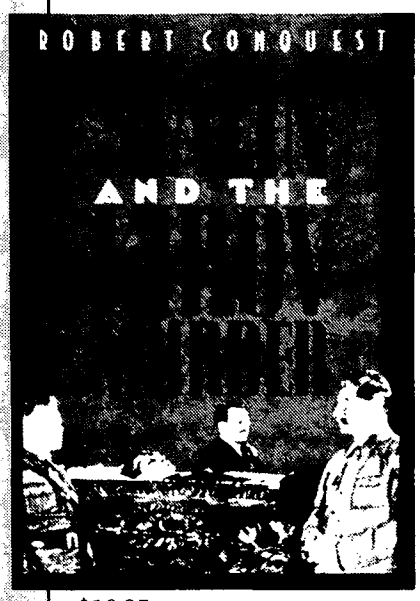
Mr. Heer says that Kenner "doesn't esteem difficult books merely because they are difficult." No? Then how does he explain Kenner's disparaging remarks about Auden's "easy" poems or his facile argument that the difficult, "resistant" book had been the cultural norm until the rise of mass literacy made the "easy" book today's false standard? In fact, Kenner gives the game away when he observes that, rather than a "strange newcomer" at this century's beginning, modernism was actually a reversion to "an old tradition, still just sufficiently alive in universities to furnish the nucleus of a readership." He invokes *Paradise Lost* and *The Divine Comedy* as examples of resistant books that required scholarly mediation before the untutored could paw their pages. "Joyce," he chuckles, "was never in higher company than when he jested that he made no demands on a reader save a lifetime's attention." Notice the elitist aroma of "higher." The unmistakable corollary of Kenner's position is that to establish itself in the first rank, a literary work must require a caste of priestly academics to explain its mysteries. I find this a somewhat narrow view of what it takes to achieve literary excellence. And I think Dante and Milton would agree. After all, one decided to write in the vernacular and the other chose to retell an awfully well-known story. Then there's Chaucer, Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, Swift, Dickens, Orwell, and . . . but the point's made, I think.

Over the years, Kenner has provided us with important critical insights and I said as much very clearly in my review. But Mr. Heer never mentions this. He doesn't mention that my piece also dealt with Kenner's 1987 book, *The Mechanic Muse*, a work which I found to be much more engaging precisely because in it he limits himself to what he does best: re-creating the historical contexts of his favorite modernist authors. Nor does Mr. Heer notice that I had some good things to say about *A Sinking Island*. For despite its smugness, it does occasionally wander into good sense. Like his idols, Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis, Kenner can be exasperatingly wrong-headed, but he always redeems himself by making you rethink issues that once seemed settled.

That Mr. Heer has chosen to review my review so selectively suggests he lacks some of the precision he demands in others. □

(*The American Spectator* welcomes letters to the editor, particularly those that do not threaten libel action. Please include a daytime phone number with all correspondence for purposes of verification by our standing army of fact checkers.)

A PRELUDE TO TERROR?



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THE CAMPAIGN SPECTATOR

DOWN THE TUBE

by Andrew Ferguson

For most of us, the campaign of '88 is over, and we can take a well-earned breather from the rigors of representative democracy. But the machinery of campaigning—the infrastructure, so to say, of mailing-list brokers, polling specialists, computer software hackers, and well-dressed "consultants" in plush offices on Connecticut Avenue whose monthly plant-care payments are more than your mortgage—this human machinery grinds on, ever onward. To keep themselves well-oiled for 1990, they faithfully read the *Post*, these men and women do, from A-1 straight through to the automobile ads. They wait for their hand-delivered weekly copy of the *National Journal*. They put in calls to the Hill. They pore over charts and graphs. They have lunch. They xerox the *Campaign Industry News*. They watch videotapes.

They watch, for example, their own work (if they're lucky) and the work of their competitors on "The Best Campaign Commercials of 1988," as compiled by Aristotle Industries. Aristotle specializes in "political technology," and its slogan is "Democracy is a Growth Business." In Washington this is undeniable, which is why sales of the "Best of" tape have been brisk: "Four or five a day," according to Aristotle's Jeffrey Easton. Easton edited the tape, which lasts about an hour, using, he says, only 5 percent of the available material. For any non-professional who has watched the "Best Campaign Commercials of 1988," this is a weighty fact, for it means that out there somewhere are twenty more hours of the same sort of stuff—*only worse*.

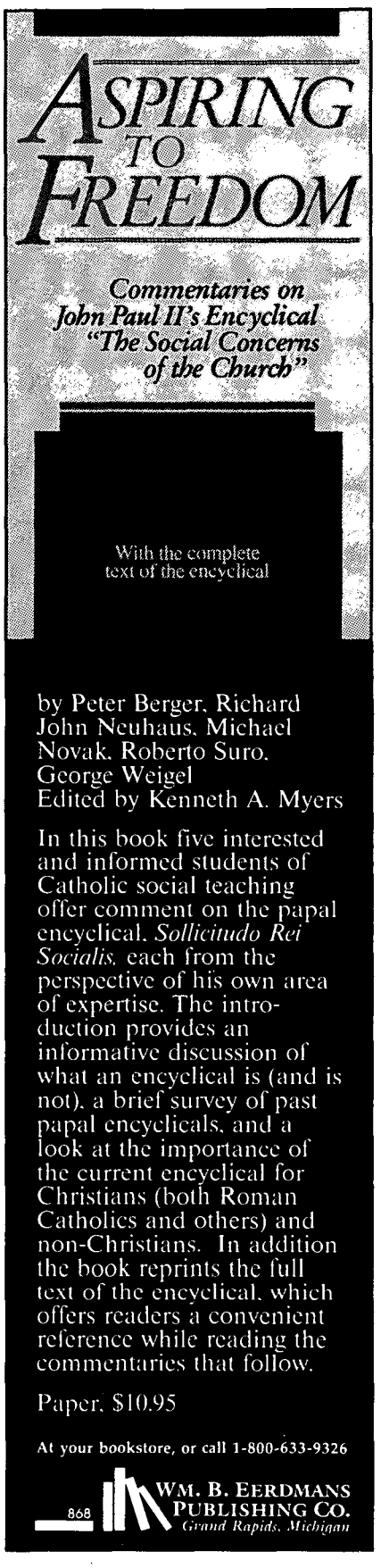
Why are the best of the ads so bad? I don't think it has anything to do with the vaunted "negativity" of the 1988 campaign; all campaigns are essentially negative. I suspect, rather, that the answer lies in the curse of "professionalism": since TV campaign ads have become a growth business—a profession—a class of pros has arisen that thinks of its work in a high-minded way, and there's nothing lower than a high-minded TV commercial. As the tape makes clear, the effort to create a video glow around an American politician can result in all manner of implausibilities: Pete Dawkins, for example, wearing blue jeans and sauntering down a crack alley in Newark, with an all-in-a-day's-work air about him. And an ad for Senator John "Call Me Jack" Danforth of Missouri begins *in media res*: We catch Jack sitting alone in his office, the lights low, with a slide projector humming and casting pictures of him against the back wall. Is he embarrassed that we interrupt him in this session of shameless narcissism? Not at all. "I was just reminiscing about my years in public office," he says, congenially, "and I thought you might like to join me."

Then there's Mike Bernhardt, who unsuccessfully challenged Governor Kunin of Vermont, and who outdoes even Danforth for high-minded implausibility. In his commercial, Bernhardt just happens to be walking through a playground when a group of teenagers just happens to be starting up a basketball game, and when one of the teenagers just happens to drop his backpack, which just happens to cause $400,000 in cocaine to spill from the bag, Bernhardt just happens to see it. Nothing gets Bernhardt angrier than the sight of all that coke going to waste, apparently, so he runs over to the bag, grabs it, and—freeze frame. End of commercial. A powerful antidrug statement, perhaps, but not a scenario played out daily in Vermont.

The implausibility descends to baseness in a commercial for Chuck Robb, the Vietnam vet and former party boy who now serves the people of the Commonwealth of Virginia in the United States Senate. First we see Robb as he chats with a couple of Marines and lets slip the fact that he had soldiers die in his arms in Vietnam, an experience whose marketability he might not have foreseen at the time; then he grabs his daughter and drags her to the Vietnam memorial on the Mall, which, the voice-over assures us, "he has visited many times." Finally he sits the girl down and lectures her on the dangers of entangling alliances. This is not your usual topic for a father-daughter heart-to-heart—unless, of course, "entangling alliances" is understood metaphorically—but she struggles nobly to appear interested anyway. Heroics run in the family.

"In the end," says Senator Bingaman of New Mexico in one of his ads, "we're *all* family," and the videotape makes clear who precisely wears the pants in our big democratic family. You wonder, watching the tape, whether there was an American over the age of sixty-five who *didn't* appear in a campaign commercial last year. Whole retirement villages seem to have been emptied to meet the casting calls. And politicians everywhere pledged "not to turn [their] back on the people who built this country" (Leo McCarthy's phrase), or on "the ones who raised us" (Bingaman), or on "those who have given us so much" (Trent Lott), or on the bloc of voters "who will ruin a politician's career if he so much as touches a dime of Social Security" (me). The pols scrambled after elderly votes with all the dignity of kids lunging for party favors. To judge from his ads, in fact, Senator Durenberger of Minnesota spends the majority of his waking hours walking in parks with senior citizens. And no wonder: he's "Senator Health Care," who "presided over a 104 percent increase in Medicare!" As perpetual senior citizen Walter Brennan used to say: no brag, just fact.

Facts, of course, do not take up too much room in the political consultant's bag of tricks. I myself don't find this cause for any particular alarm, as some guardians of the public good do, but neither do I think it's too much to ask that the admen at least entertain the viewer if they insist on wasting his time. My own favorites among this cream-of-the-crop selection are of the kind which research shows to be the least effective—that is, the kind which are purely frivolous and content-free. These involve, not surprisingly, a heavy emphasis on animals doing stupid things, and for people like me who are forever seeking to recover the lost bliss of childhood by watching re-runs of "The Three Stooges" and "Mr. Ed," the gambit is a sure-fire attention-getter. Jeffrey Easton says that the animal strategy usually emerges "when you're twenty points down with a week to election day." Obviously that explains why the political experts have deduced that the strategy doesn't work: only sure losers try it. The tautology aside, the fact remains that when Senator Melcher of Montana brought out commercials starring a herd of talking cows, his opponent, Conrad Burns, was already waltzing to victory. The best commercial on the tape was aired by Bob Jordan, who challenged North Carolina's Governor Jim Martin by portraying the governor's budget staff as four chimps, dressed in business suits, sitting around a conference table. One chimp flailed his arms, another punched a calculator, a third smooched a telephone receiver, the fourth drank a can of soda and did consecutive backflips on the table—in rollerskates! It's enough to restore your faith in the democratic process. □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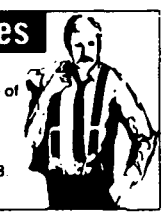

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MISCELLANEOUS

QUESTION: Who should pay for the money claims arising from the downing of Flight 103? Answer: Those responsible for the bombing should pay and the guilty ones in my opinion are the close to five billion of us over the age of nine. A ten year old should know right from wrong. Terrorism stems from the 100% wrong platform of every country in the world. The #1 wrong plank is winnerless war-waging—that's ordered suicide; others-inflationary fixed wages—we need a money split; something less than 100% of us on the production line at the grass roots level; trade inequity; and secularism. The United Nations should send each of us the bill for this and future tragedies if things aren't changed. In the meantime the people in each country should change their platform to one that makes sense. For an every country platform that HAD to be adopted in a previous herenow send S.A.S.E. to 5 WAY PEACE PLAN, Box 2243, Youngstown, OH 44506.

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CURRENT WISDOM

Kentucky Kernel

In an illustrious student newspaper, a victim of higher education at the University of Kentucky dares to speak out under the very eye of the Federal Bureau of Investigation:

On society's behalf, I not only apologize to the relatives and friends who have survived the victims of Bundy's ruthless rage and sanity, but to Ted Bundy, himself. For it is evident to me that a society which glorifies violence in its media, deals out death and destruction in its foreign policy, and leaves thousands to die from poverty, hunger, despair and sickness within its borders is the true root cause of senseless murder; that of Bundy as well as those he committed.

[January 27, 1989]

Esquire

A few self-effacing thoughts from Mr. Lee Eisenberg, fresh from that remedial writing class he has been taking to toughen up his prose:

On the night of November 21, the eve of the twenty-fifth anniversary of John F. Kennedy's death, many of us here had a chance to experience again what a room full of idealism feels like. It feels good.

The occasion was a dinner that we gave at the "21" Club in New York City, and the plan was to pay tribute to the men and women of the 1988 Esquire Register (featured in our December issue). More than two dozen of them attended, along with a gaggle of honorees from past years: diva Kathleen Battle ('86), video artist Skip Blumberg ('84), chef Jonathan Waxman ('85), among many others.

What happened on that night was a kind of combustion, ignited by a mixture of people with ambitions that ranged from private enterprise to selfless enterprise. In due time, and especially after a glass or two of wine, the guests discovered they had something in common. Each was living a life of purpose. Some had taken advantage of the gifts they were born with; others had taken the tougher hands they were dealt and found ways to make a dent—and to make strides toward the aforementioned idealism.

Coming as it did on the heels of an election campaign that was long on marketing crap and bereft of the I-word, the evening sparkled. Not from exchanges that were earnest, self-righteous, or smug, but from conversations that were laced with humor, civility, self-deprecation, and a dash of healthy skepticism. Which is exactly what a room full of idealism should sound like.

[March 1989]

New York Times

British filmmaker Mike Leigh explains why Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher has held that lofty office since 1979:

"It's a widely shared view here—and not just among film makers—that Thatcher is a cancer, a disease," Mr. Leigh said in a recent telephone interview from London, where his latest play, "Smelling a Rat," is currently running.

[February 19, 1989]

Daily Gleaner

A rewarding new area of literary criticism sure to replace deconstructionism in every lit department in the Northern Hemisphere:

GRANTS PASS, Ore. (AP)—Trees know when someone is chopping into them and let out a "tremendous cry of alarm" when the axe hits, says an Oregon physicist.

Ed Wagner says he has found evidence that trees talk to each other in a language he calls W-waves.

"If you chop into a tree, you can see that adjacent trees put out an electrical pulse," said Wagner. "This indicates they communicate directly."

Explaining the phenomenon, Wagner pointed to a blip on a strip chart recording of the electrical pulse.

"It put out a tremendous cry of alarm," he said. "The adjacent trees put out smaller ones."

[February 7, 1989]

Lansing State Journal

Breathless reports on the artistry of the Paloma Picasso of Petaluma, California:

Carol Pollard? Busy woman. Full-time flight attendant, full-time honor student, full-time captain of industry. You could say she's working like a Trojan.

Make that working with a Trojan. Pollard thinks nothing of going down to the local shop-and-save in her home town of Petaluma, Calif., and filling up her shopping cart with Trojan condoms. Hundreds of them, sometimes thousands. The checkout clerks now yawn when she goes back for hundreds more, in a week or so.

Oh, she doesn't use them. She wants you to wear them—on your ears, around your neck, on your chest like a campaign ribbon—and later, in a clinch, wear them where they matter.

Handy things to have around in an age of AIDS, genital herpes, unplanned pregnancies, and genital warts.

[January 8, 1989]

New Republic

Former Carter Administration speech writer and gifted oneirocritic Dr. Hendrik Hertzberg freely admits that notwithstanding the Mt. Everest of evidence at his disposal, he remains uncertain of Ronald Reagan's niceness:

. . . after Reagan had been president for a while, I had a strange dream, one so vivid I remember it to this day. I was back in the E.O.B. Somehow I had been given a job on Reagan's staff. The telephone rang. "Please hold for the president," said a White House operator. The next voice was Reagan's. "I just wanted to thank you for that draft you sent over," he said. "It was very good. I'll be making a few changes in it, but I want you to know how much I appreciate your work." "Gee, thanks, Mr. President," I said. "That's all right," he said. "Well, have a nice day."

I awoke feeling an idiotic mixture of horror and affection. Eight years later, I cannot say whether Reagan is truly a "nice man" or not.

[February 6, 1989]

Mother Jones

Mr. Steven S. Ross in his investment advice column reveals what happens when dope fiends and free-love adepts take over an ice cream parlor:

Ben & Jerry's Homemade. Far more speculative is over-the-counter Ben & Jerry's Homemade, a $45 million Vermont-based maker of all-natural ice cream.

Company sales have grown tenfold since 1984, and Ben & Jerry's now distributes in about 35 states. Tucker, Anthony & R. L. Day, Inc., expects continued annual sales increases of about 35 percent a year, and says 1989 sales could reach $57 million.

"The company is founded on the basis of linked prosperity," says Alice Tepper Marlin, president of the Council on Economic Priorities. "No one in the company can earn more than five times what the least well-paid employee earns." Ben & Jerry's gives 7.5 percent of its pretax profits to social causes. In addition, it gives free ice cream to any nonprofit organization in Vermont that asks for it.

The list of charities isn't your normal, safe group, either. It includes aid for battered women and the homeless. The company also has a "1% for Peace" program; one percent of its pretax income goes to support an educational foundation called Peace Through Understanding. Some Ben & Jerry's ice cream packaging pushes the idea that the federal government should divert one percent of its military spending into peace programs.

Elise Brown, public relations manager for Ben & Jerry's, says its peace packaging has not hurt distribution at all. "We've had great response to the product," she explains. "There's been no major opposition."

[February/March 1989]

New Criterion

The joys of scholarship and the fine arts euphorically, ebulliently demonstrated by two happy aesthetes in the correspondence pages of Hilton Kramer's engaging mag:

To the Editors:

Just so that historians of the future will not be totally confused, let me set the record straight concerning the location of two famous paintings by Nicolas Poussin mentioned in Creighton Gilbert's review of the Fort Worth exhibition ("A Fresh View of Young Poussin," December 1988). The *Death of Germanicus* is, as most everyone knows, in Minneapolis, not in Detroit. The *Diana and Endymion* is not in Boston, but in Detroit. Unfortunately, exhibition catalogues are not the only "breeding ground of factual errors."

—J. Patrice Marandel
Curator, European Paintings
The Detroit Institute of Arts
Detroit, Mich.

Creighton Gilbert replies:

The correction is just. The walls at Fort Worth were graced with three very similar major Poussins, belonging to Minneapolis, Detroit, and Boston. I erred for the all too common reason that I thought I knew without checking, and so labeled Minneapolis's as Detroit's and Detroit's as Boston's. I would rather not have done it wrong, but still there was a nice compensation, in that the numerous correcting letters (to me as well as to the editors) offered surprising evidence of how widely the piece was actually read, and how closely, even to a two-word parenthesis, and implied that it did not contain any other mistakes. This one at least was "harmless," in the legal use of the word, in that no further statements were based on it.

Mr. Marandel writes "most everyone knows" where the pictures really are, which is indeed the case with respect to specialists. That seems to contradict his stated sole reason for writing in, to keep future "historians" from being "totally confused." They would be unconfused by having looked at the catalogue, my duly cited source. In his last sentence Mr. Marandel points out the truism that errors are not found only in exhibition catalogues, in which I have in other essays noted quite a few, some alas not "harmless." If, as seems possible, the point is that I should hold back on recording them, lest I generate heightened interest in correcting mine, I would say just the opposite, provided the final goal is the general good rather than the status claims of specialists.

[February 1989]

Nation

The sad life of Salman Rushdie, before life got sadder still—for him:

In my British incarnation, I have America's bombs for neighbors and could find myself in the absurd position of dying for Ronald Reagan. In India, the country of my birth, the invasion of U.S. corporations gathers force, while in Bhopal the memory of Union Carbide's great poisonous cloud that ate people's lungs and eyes has not faded. And in Pakistan, my third home, President Zia ul-Haq is, like Pahlavi, Somoza, and Marcos, a bit of a Yank. All of which, you'd have supposed, entitles one to one's say.

[March 22, 1986]

New York Times

The old poseur, Normal Mailer, ever on the make for the main chance, hears Ayatollah Khomeini's death threats and envisages armies of American Baptists and Methodists, marching on Greenwich Village, heaving vinyl-covered Bibles at the urban sophisticates, and vowing to turn the Upper East Side into Heritage, USA:

In this week of turmoil, we can now envision a fearful time in the future when fundamentalist groups in America, stealing their page from this international episode, will know how to apply the same methods to American writers and bookstores. If they ever succeed, it will be due to the fact that we never found an honest resistance to the terrorization of Salman Rushdie.

[February 23, 1989]

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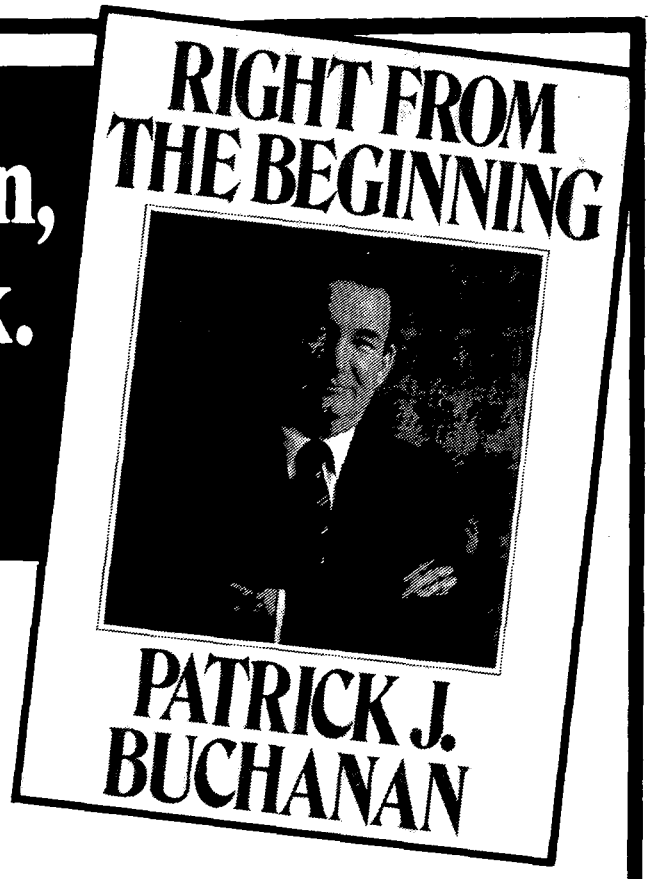

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